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**‘At home’ in Standen: A study of the Beale family’s lived
experience of their late-nineteenth century Arts and Crafts
home, 1890-1914**

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Sussex

2016

Statement:

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the social and cultural significance of Standen from the perspective of the Beale family's lived experience of the property from 1890 to 1914. The Beales commissioned architect Philip Webb to design Standen in 1891, they were sole owners of the property until it was bequeathed to the National Trust in the early 1970s. Although Standen is recognised by architectural historians as a fine and complete example of Art and Crafts architecture of the period and is celebrated for its William Morris wallpapers, little is known about how the family experienced the house. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's theory which understands a user's space as lived and not represented, this thesis moves away from traditional architectural accounts to focus on the family's lived experience and the role they played in the creation of Standen. It analyses family and estate archives, the property and its collection of objects and photographs to reveal that Standen's decorative interior, as an 'eclectic' mix of styles blending Arts and Crafts with Aestheticism, was interwoven with social and cultural meaning. Representing original and innovative research into the history of domestic interiors and living space, this thesis aims to encourage new ways of engaging with and critically understanding the late-nineteenth century Arts and Crafts Movement.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I must thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for making this thesis possible by funding my research project with a Collaborative Doctoral Award. I also wholeheartedly thank my supervisors Dr Meaghan Clarke and Professor Maurice Howard of the University of Sussex Department of Art History and Tessa Wild at the National Trust Regional Office for their unfailing guidance, sound advice and words of wisdom. At Standen, I thank House Manager Ben Dale and his team who have been a pleasure to work with; their encouragement and assistance has never wavered. I am hugely indebted to a number of Beale family descendants for allowing me to interview them and spend time in their homes researching private family documents, especially Gillian Edom and Dr. Jonathan Wager. Another special mention must go to Sally Roberson for her enthusiastic editing of my thesis drafts, her friendly support and not least, for producing some high quality photographic images. In this connection, I also want to thank Simon Lane, Image Librarian at the University of Sussex Art History department for producing fine quality digital images from a batch of newly discovered, Beale family, glass plate negatives; the results he achieved are outstanding. I also sincerely wish to thank Eileen Hall for sparing time to edit and proofread this thesis and for giving me such valuable advice and my dear friend Dr Paula Riddy for her wise words of encouragement. Finally and not least, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to my husband and sons who have tirelessly supported me throughout the entire project.

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List of Abbreviations

BCA Birmingham City Archives, Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Birmingham, B1 2ND

BFP Beale family private archive

KCLS Kensington and Chelsea Local Studies Collection, Kensington Central Library, Phillimore Walk, London, W8 7RX

NAL National Art Library, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2RL

NTS Standen Archive, National Trust, Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4NE

NTSR Standen Archive, National Trust Regional Office, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH

RIBA Philip Webb Archive, RIBA British Architectural Library Drawings and Archives Collections, Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, SW7 2RL

SFA Sambourne Family Archive, Leighton House Museum, 12 Holland Park Road, London W14 8LZ

SPAB Philip Webb Archive, SPAB (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings), 37 Spital Square, London, E1 6DY

SSFA Slade School of Fine Art, Archive Records, UCL Library Special Collections and UCL Records Office, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

TNA National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

WCA Westminster City Archives, Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London, SW1P 2DE

WSRO Standen Archive, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1DD

Introduction

‘Standen, one of Philip Webb’s finest houses [...]’¹

In 1965, the *Sussex Pevsner* architectural guide described Standen as a ‘masterpiece’.² Designed in 1892-4 by architect Philip Webb (1831-1915) for the Beale family, Standen was designated as a Grade I country house in 1948.³ The house in East Grinstead, West Sussex, essentially typifies Webb’s later architectural style, with its ‘use of a variety of traditional materials and elements of more than one style of the past’.⁴ Situated on a rural site sloping from north-west to south-east, the house is surrounded by agricultural land and woodland and has extensive views to the valley to the south and east to Ashdown Forest in the distance. Built in the Wealden vernacular tradition, the north entrance front of Standen consists of a rectangular family block housing a four-storey, rough-cast water tower. This adjoins a large, two-storey servants’ wing at the north-east end to create an L-shape which forms two sides of an enclosed entrance courtyard (Fig. 1). The servants’ wing has two substantial gables faced with weatherboarding. The north front is chiefly of brick with evenly spaced sash windows which are interrupted by a central bay with a jutting stone porch. On the right of the porch is the canted stone mullion and transom window of the hall which was extended by Webb in 1898. On first floor level above the porch is a four-light mullion and transom window and set into the roof above is a row of four, flat-roofed, dormer windows.

The nineteenth-century building is joined to ‘Holly Bush’, a mid-fifteenth century (Grade II listed) farmhouse which forms one side of a grassed area known as ‘Goose Green’ (Fig. 2). The other side is flanked by an old timber-framed barn that is also a listed building (Fig. 3). An old granary and grain store adjacent to the barn form part of a Stable Block at the rear of Holly Bush farmhouse. The Stable Block with west facing entrance comprises a coach house, forming one

¹ Ian Nairn and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Sussex* (Yale University Press, 1965), 72.

² *Ibid.*

³ ‘Standen’, *English Heritage*, 2015, accessed 12 November 2014. <http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1249027>.

⁴ Nairn and Pevsner, *Sussex*, 494.

side of a central stable yard with several loose boxes, cleaning rooms, and other spaces dedicated to keeping horses (Fig. 4).

The south, garden-facing, front of the family block is two storeys and an attic (Fig. 5). The attic features a row of five weather-boarded gables with tall brick chimneys which stand high above the roof line. The first floor level is mostly tile hung and also lit with evenly spaced sash windows. At ground floor level there is a central porch, mainly of stone and sash windows with segmental arches typically favoured by Webb. At the west end is a large single-story, glass-roofed conservatory featuring five brick arches. The far left arch forms an opening entrance to a recessed tiled porch with a seat. Inside the porch on the left side are stairs leading to the 'little room', a small playroom (Fig. 6).

The interior space of the family block accommodates the principal family rooms, all of which have individual fireplaces and other bespoke features such as panelling and cupboards designed by Webb. Many of the family rooms retain their original Morris & Co. wallpaper. Centrally positioned to the east of the conservatory to maximise the extensive countryside views are the Drawing Room and Dining Room. Behind the Drawing Room is a small Inner Hall positioned at the foot of the main staircase and to the west a large Hall connects to a Billiard Room with its adjacent washrooms. On the east side of the Hall is an entrance Porch with access to a Cloakroom and a Study beyond. Behind the Dining Room, there is an entrance door off the corridor to the Study (later called the Business Room). Further eastwards this corridor leads to the Morning Room and a 'dog-leg' corridor which proceeds past a Strong Room to the Servants' Wing. Mrs Beale's Storeroom tucked behind the back stairs and the Butler's Pantry sit opposite each other at the entrance to this space. The inner part of the servants' wing houses the Kitchen, Servants' Hall and other functional spaces, such as Larders and Coal Rooms dedicated to the service of the main house. On the first floor there are twelve bedrooms and originally, one bathroom and two lavatories. The second floor, attic storey has eight bedrooms, one bathroom and several storage spaces.

Widely regarded as Webb's last major work, Standen was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1972 and is now considered to be a fine and important

example of late-Victorian 'Arts and Crafts' architecture.⁵ This popular perception of the property is largely based on its architectural significance emanating from scholarship centred on Webb and his strong connections with William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.⁶ Subsequently, interpreting Standen through the achievement of its architect or association with Arts and Crafts protagonists has led to other important aspects of the property's history being overshadowed. This thesis argues that Standen's social and historical context as a family home and site of lived experience are important factors which deserve equal attention to studies based on architectural merits and celebrated individuals. Drawing on Lynne Walker's approach which advocates that the multi-faceted lens of material culture offers a more inclusive and flexible approach to examining ideas of home than conventional architectural history, this study examines Standen, its family archives and collection of indigenous objects to consider them as traces of the family's lived experience from 1890 to 1914.⁷

The approach underpinning this study is indebted to the theory of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre who believed in the idea of 'lived experience'. His important work entitled *The Production of Space* is particularly relevant as it is concerned with the marginalisation of 'users' or 'inhabitants' of spaces by spatial practice, methods which are principally determined by architecture, architects and planners alike.⁸ As Dana Arnold has identified, 'although he was mainly concerned with urban environments, Lefebvre's method of analysis can be used to equal effect when looking at other kinds of buildings including the country house'.⁹ An analysis based on post-structuralist theory is one way to avoid a predetermined reading of the social history of architecture which has been encoded by the rigid frameworks attached to past investigations.¹⁰

⁵ 'Standen - Visitor Information - National Trust', accessed 18 October 2012, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/standen/.

⁶ 'Standen as an icon of the Arts and Crafts Movement today' see Brian D. Coleman, *Historic Arts & Crafts Homes of Great Britain* (Gibbs Smith, 2005), 119.

⁷ Lynne Walker, 'Home Making: An Architectural Perspective', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 3 (March 2002): 824.

⁸ Neil Leach, ed., 'Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space (extracts)', in *Rethinking Architecture: Reader in Cultural Theory* (Psychology Press, 1997), 139-147 (145).

⁹ Dana Arnold, 'A Class Performance: Social Histories of Architecture', in *Reading Architectural History* (Psychology Press, 2012), 127-142 (134).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 128.

Contending that '[t]he user's space is lived – not represented (or conceived)', Lefebvre makes an important distinction between the abstract space of experts such as architects and planners and the concrete space of the everyday activities of users.¹¹ In the case of Standen and Beale family history, this study has utilised Lefebvre's ideas to analyse and understand their experience as 'users' of a physical, 'concrete' domestic space to which they inscribed meaning. Up until now, much of twentieth-century academic discourse relating to Standen has led to it being perceived as an architecturally represented, 'conceptual' space interpreted through its architect, effectively side-lining the Beales' involvement with the property.

I. Constructing Standen's public profile

One publication which has contributed to the construction and elevation of Standen's public profile for over a century is *Country Life*. Spanning the years from 1910 to the present day, Standen's Arts and Crafts and architectural heritage has been consistently championed by the magazine. One of its latest publications, a large illustrated tome of 2011 by Clive Aslet entitled *The Arts and Crafts Country House* includes a chapter which refers to Standen in relation to Webb and his connections with the Arts and Crafts movement.¹² The text is accompanied by archive photographs which appeared in the *Country Life* articles published in 1910 and 1970. Aslet's 2011 publication is based upon a well-used format which interprets Standen through references to Webb's design style or character. An example can be found in Aslet's earlier publication, *The Last Country Houses* of 1982 which contains a short paragraph about Standen in the catalogue section. Commenting on the idiosyncrasies of its architect, Aslet claims that the 'house is comfortable and homely and spacious and light, but perhaps also slightly awkward, like Webb himself'.¹³ He also thought there was a dearth of Morris & Co. fabrics and wallpaper at Standen, asserting that they 'were used, but only sparingly'.¹⁴ Not only was Margaret Beale directly buying Morris & Co. textiles and furniture for Standen, but their range of

¹¹ Leach, 'Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space (extracts)', 145.

¹² Clive Aslet, *The Arts and Crafts Country House: From the Archives of Country Life* (London: Aurum Press, 2012), 7–34.

¹³ Clive Aslet, *The Last Country Houses* (Yale University Press, 1985), 329.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

reproduction furniture inspired some of her other furniture purchases from provincial dealers, a subject examined in more detail in Part Six, section two.

In 1910, the architectural editor of *Country Life*, Lawrence Weaver, praised Standen as a fine example of Webb's architectural skill in an article written for the May issue. Focussing on good building work and craftsmanship, his prime intention was to showcase the work of Webb, an architect who had regularly shunned any form of publicity for most of his working life. Weaver's article equated Webb's skills to those of an accomplished sculptor. Comparing Webb's guiding principles with the core elements of sculpture, he asserted that the 'best results come from the harmony of observation, selection and convention', factors which contributed to 'a work of art such as Standen'.¹⁵ His article gives the impression that Standen's artistic qualities emanated solely from its architect, making no allowances for the preferences determined by the Beale family as commissioning clients.

Another *Country Life* publication which aimed to provide a glossy showcase for architects and aspiring clients was *The House and its Equipment* of 1911, edited by Weaver which includes a brief mention of Standen. His introduction 'pleaded' with readers 'to approach all questions relating to the house and its equipment in an architectural spirit'.¹⁶ In another section, Charles H. B. Quennell draws attention to the Webb-designed fireplace and built-in wardrobe of the 'Larkspur' bedroom as an example of architectural furniture. The design which features a mirror fixed to the exterior of the wardrobe door is criticised by Quennell as 'breaking the unity of the surface'.¹⁷ Although he acknowledges that there may have been 'reasons for so doing with which one is not familiar', he gives no consideration to the notion that the design decision may have been the result of collaboration between architect and client. Architect William Lethaby, who wrote the hugely influential publication *Philip Webb and his Work* in 1935 also included a brief mention of Standen in chapter six.¹⁸ Lethaby's

¹⁵ Lawrence Weaver, 'Standen, East Grinstead a residence of Mr James S. Beale', *Country Life*, 7 May 1910, 666-672 (672).

¹⁶ Lawrence Weaver, 'Introduction', in *The House and Its Equipment*, ed. Lawrence Weaver (London: Country Life, 1911), vii.

¹⁷ Charles H.B. Quennell. 'Architectural Furniture', in *The House and Its Equipment*, 21.

¹⁸ William Richard Lethaby, 'The Business of an Architect, 1859-1900', in *Philip Webb and His Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), 86-118.

publication written in a 'nostalgic' style is essentially a biographical account of his friend Webb. It highlighted some of the main features of Standen which epitomised Webb's architectural, Arts and Crafts principles, such as the linking of old Hollybush Farm House with the new building, explaining simply that 'Webb loved to anchor his new works up to something which had age and character'.¹⁹ He also noted how 'Webb loved a tower-like block' referring to the water-tower that abuts the service wing and the main building.²⁰ Missing from this and many other accounts of Standen is an acknowledgment of the extent that Webb collaborated with the Beales on the design, a theme examined by this study in Part Two.

Lethaby's devotion to his friend inspired another architect, John Brandon-Jones, to champion the work of Webb and William Morris throughout his working life.²¹ Responsible for restoring Standen when the property was bequeathed to the National Trust in the early 1970s, he was committed to the idea of quality craftsmanship and believed that beauty and craftsmanship in buildings was more important than following fashionable trends. He thought that Webb's great contribution to British building tradition and architecture was not so much based on Red House, his first commission, but through some of his later works, referring to Standen as an outstanding example.²² During the 1970s, the National Trust had begun to consider the merits of accepting Helen Beale's bequest. It coincided with two consecutive articles by architectural historian Mark Girouard published in *Country Life* in February²³ and March 1970²⁴ featuring Standen. Furthermore, these articles bolstered a campaign being mounted by The Victorian Society to highlight the merits of Standen to the National Trust, based on the premise that Webb was one of the leading domestic architects of the late-nineteenth century.²⁵ Whilst praising Webb's architectural ability, the February article contained a detailed description of

¹⁹ Ibid., 109.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ His father an admirer of Lethaby, Brandon-Jones was 'brought up on Lethaby's books' see John Brandon-Jones, 'The Work of Philip Webb and Norman Shaw', *Architectural Association Journal* 131 (June 1955): 9–21.

²² Ibid., 10.

²³ Mark Girouard, 'Standen, Sussex -I', *Country Life*, 26 February 1970: 494–497.

²⁴ Mark Girouard, 'Standen, Sussex -II', *Country Life*, 5 March 1970: 554–57.

²⁵ Peter Rose, 'The Saving of Standen', *The Decorative Arts Society 1850 to the Present* 28 (2004): 175.

Standen's exterior and locality. Scant mention is made of the social and cultural significance of the property or the Beale family except whilst emphasising Webb's personal characteristics in relation to Standen's design, namely his 'hatred of pretentiousness and concern for the people who were to live in the house'.²⁶ Girouard interprets the property solely through the figure of Webb. The second article, written for the March edition describes Standen's interior layout and design in detail, emphasising that it was the only one of Webb's larger houses to remain relatively unaltered, another factor that had an impact on the campaign mounted to persuade the National Trust to accept Helen Beale's bequest in 1972.²⁷

Much of the detail contained in these articles forms the basis of a chapter about Standen that was added to Girouard's *The Victorian Country House* first published in 1971 and revised in 1979.²⁸ This publication was one of the first to engage with a revised approach to the study of Victorian country houses which discussed architectural features in conjunction with their social and economic contexts. However, when discussing Standen, Girouard falls short of these aims by continuing to explain the property through its architect, expressing his opinions of Standen in terms of Webb's architectural strengths and weaknesses. Whilst he simply acknowledges that touches of 'Webb's individual fancy',²⁹ such as alcoves and built-in cupboards can be seen all over the house, he makes no reference to how the Beales might have contributed to these design decisions other than to state that Webb and Beale had their disagreements but respected each other.³⁰ Girouard does, however concede that it was 'one of Webb's happiest houses' hinting at the possibility that a degree of collaboration had existed between client and architect.³¹

Another publication which goes beyond the physical and architectural description of a property to examine the social context of owners is Jill Franklin's *The Gentleman's Country House and its plan 1835-1914* of 1981,

²⁶ Girouard, 'Standen, Sussex -I', 497.

²⁷ Rose, 'The Saving of Standen', 175.

²⁸ Mark Girouard, 'Standen, Sussex', in *The Victorian Country House*, rev. ed. (Book Club Associates, 1979), 381–89.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 386.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 381.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 387.

which also features a ground floor plan of Standen.³² Whilst arguing that to understand Victorian and Edwardian houses it is essential to comprehend their planning, she offers no such explanation for the ground floor plans of Standen illustrated in the publication.³³ Asserting that the plan had ‘an irregularity that was almost wayward’ referring to its ‘unusually small Hall’ and ‘great number of corridors for a house of its size’, her approach to Standen borrows from the stance of Weaver’s 1910 *Country Life* article.³⁴ According to Franklin, an understanding of the planning of a country house revealed the owners’ view of society and their style of living. Yet, apart from a few limited details given for some of the larger houses mentioned, she does not explain how the design and character of a house such as Standen reflected the views and lifestyle of its owner.

Even negative views of the house proffered by other scholars of the 1980s relied on a perspective based on the architect, such as those of Roderick Gradidge, who did not generally favour Webb’s architectural style. A chapter in his 1980 book *Dream Houses* discusses Standen and Avon Tyrell.³⁵ He suggests that Webb was out of step with decorative fashions in his use of wallpaper at Standen at a time when it was going out of fashion, asserting that Lutyens never used it because his clients considered wallpaper to be vulgar.³⁶ It is notable that Gradidge assumes that the decision-making rested with Webb and does not consider the possibility that James and Margaret Beale might have been involved in choosing Standen’s interior decoration.

II. The Grogans

Interpreting Standen from an architectural perspective was also strengthened by architects Arthur and Helen Grogan and the part they played in securing Standen when the Beale family bequest was accepted by the National Trust in the 1970s. They had lived in Bedford Park, West London since the 1950s and were passionate collectors of late nineteenth-century British works of art and craftsmanship. In an article published in the December 1981 issue of

³² J. Franklin, *The Gentleman’s Country House and Its Plan 1835-1914* (Routledge, 1981), 168.

³³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁵ Roderick Gradidge, ‘Standen and Avon Tyrell 1891’, in *Dream Houses: The Edwardian Ideal* (Constable, 1980), 59–70.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

Connoisseur, Dan Klein argues that the character of Standen as we know it today was very much created by Arthur and Helen Grogan who came to an agreement with the Nation Trust in 1973 and lived as Administrators at Standen for the next ten years.³⁷ Directly quoting the Grogans, Klein describes how they refurbished and reorganised Standen through ‘visual research into what the house ought to be’.³⁸ The architects were staunch supporters of Webb and very keen to showcase his influence when they refurbished Standen. Klein details how they tried to ‘put it back as it either was, or could have been’ revealing how much freedom the Grogans enjoyed to impose their own interpretation on Standen, even if it varied with what was known about the Beales’ taste. Although Klein acknowledges that ‘the Beales shared the contemporary taste for relatively safe antique or reproduction furniture and travel souvenirs’, no further examples of their decorative taste are explored.³⁹

In 2004, Peter Rose also concluded that Arthur and Helen Grogan hugely influenced the way that the Beales’ taste was perceived. He discussed their impact in ‘The Saving of Standen’, an article published in *The Decorative Arts Society Journal*. It gives an account of their stewardship of Standen, prompted by the National Trust’s recent acquisition of Red House at Bexleyheath, another ‘Arts and Crafts’ property. Concerned that the National Trust might face similar problems at Red House as those experienced at Standen, he argues that one of the main problems at Standen was thought to be the contents of its interior, as the house was ‘woefully lacking in pieces of strong Arts and Crafts character.’⁴⁰ Rose outlines how the Grogans were mainly concerned to create an ‘Arts and Crafts’ interior which the Beales might have bequeathed to the Trust if circumstances had been different.⁴¹ He stresses that the interior of the house was based upon Grogans’ idea of what should be there, not a reflection the Beales’ original choice. Moreover, he argues that the Grogans thought Mrs Beale belonged to a pre-Arts and Crafts tradition which meant that her choice was limited to very simple furnishings. Rose concludes that in order to re-furnish the house, instead of following what was thought to be the ‘conservative taste’

³⁷ Dan Klein, ‘Standen: An Earthly Paradise’, *Connoisseur* 208 (December 1981): 255–59.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁴⁰ Rose, ‘The Saving of Standen’, 176.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

of Margaret Beale, the Grogans embarked on a collecting policy based on what they thought Webb would have preferred in the context of its architectural character.⁴²

Arthur Grogan's views on the Beales' taste were generally adopted by the National Trust in the 1970s and 80s, as exemplified in an official Standen Guide Book of 1977 written by him.⁴³ Suggesting that Mrs Beale's garden design and planting preferences were at odds with Webb's architecture and aesthetic ideas, his viewpoint has influenced many opinions of the house and garden since. Although very little scholarly attention has been paid to Standen's garden, an article published in *Country Life* by horticulturalist Arthur Hellyer attempted to redress the balance in 1983. Recognising the Beale family's involvement, he believed that the gardens had 'been overshadowed by the importance of the house as a rare example of Webb's work'.⁴⁴ He asserted that the gardens deserved more attention, arguing that Margaret Beale was mainly responsible for Standen's original garden planting scheme and probably the design as well.⁴⁵ He makes an important point, not previously well-known, that it was the Beales who employed landscape designer G.B. Simpson in 1890, even before Webb was engaged as an architect.

III. The 'human quality' and concepts of domestic space

It was not until the beginning of the twenty-first century that scholars such as art historian Wendy Hitchmough became interested in the social and cultural context of Standen. Her publication *The Arts and Crafts Lifestyle and Design* of 2000 investigates how Arts and Crafts homes were arranged and experienced once they were designed and built.⁴⁶ Containing many references to Standen throughout, it discusses the function of individual rooms and their decorative settings, quoting Beale family memories to exemplify how social convention affected the way that these rooms were used. Although Hitchmough's approach to Arts and Crafts homes, in particular Standen, was framed by an 'Arts and

⁴² Ibid., 178.

⁴³ Arthur Grogan and National Trust (Great Britain), *Standen, Sussex (Guidebook)* ([London]: National Trust, 1977), 30.

⁴⁴ Arthur Hellyer, 'Gardens for a Late-Victorian House, Standen, East Grinstead, Sussex', *Country Life*, 28 April 1983, 1101.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Wendy Hitchmough, *The Arts & Crafts Lifestyle and Design* (New York: Watson-Guption, 2000).

Crafts' label, her study aimed to reinstate 'the client as an animating presence'.⁴⁷ The social and cultural importance of one of Webb's earlier clients had already been thoroughly examined by Caroline Dakers in 1993 in *Clouds: A biography of a country house*, designed in 1876-85 for Percy and Madeline Wyndham.⁴⁸ It tells the story of 'Clouds'; positioning it as a focal point for the patronage of art and design in late-nineteenth century Britain to underscore that a 'sense of place' was integral to social and cultural contexts. An emphasis on 'place' and 'client' are ideas which have been developed in this study, particularly in relation to the Beales' inspiration for Standen and their collaboration with Webb.

One of the latest architectural scholars to contribute to contemporary perceptions of Standen is Sheila Kirk in *Philip Webb: Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture* of 2005.⁴⁹ Her in-depth study of Webb and his work stressing his considerable influence upon the architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement includes eleven pages about Standen in her chapter on country houses. Kirk's approach differs from earlier architectural accounts of Webb's career. Her analysis is interlaced with brief details of Webb's interaction with his clients and the extent of their collaboration on house design. She is careful to illustrate many examples of Webb's legacy at Standen; in the dining room for instance, the coved chimney breast inspired Lutyens's design for 'Goddards' (1899).⁵⁰ Her text is littered with snippets of information about Beale family involvement in the design process, such as their wish to include a 'wind-mill pump' which required the erection of a water tower in the house.⁵¹ She also acknowledges how the family continued to play a role in shaping Standen through decisions made over subsequent alterations, such as the enlargement of the living-hall in 1898 to accommodate a grand piano.⁵² Kirk hints at the underlying humanity of the house so often ignored by scholars before her by referring to family memories, such as a granddaughter's recollection that the family found Standen delightful and wonderfully comfortable.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁸ Caroline Dakers, *Clouds: The Biography of a Country House* (Yale University Press, 1993).

⁴⁹ Sheila Kirk, *Philip Webb : Pioneer of Arts & Crafts Architecture* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2005).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 160.

⁵¹ Ibid., 151.

⁵² Ibid., 154.

In drawing attention to the small details of Webb's interaction with his clients and the underlying humanity of the property, Kirk's study is reminiscent of the approach taken by Standen's first architectural commentator, Arts and Crafts architect Halsey Ricardo (1854-1928).⁵³ Writing as the nineteenth-century came to a close, his article 'The House in the Country' published in *The Magazine of Art* in January 1900 asserted that 'the house in the country' should not only be the outcome of the site, but that it should reflect the 'human' character of its owners:

The human quality of the building lingers with one like a choice flavour; like a portrait by a fine painter one wants to know the sitter; so here one gets a kindly impression of all the human individualities that have co-operated to bring about the result.⁵⁴

His words emphasise the human character of the building, indicating that the important qualities we look for in an individual, such as honesty and loyalty, should be what we expect of a house and believed that those attributes existed at Standen.⁵⁵ In short, Ricardo was convinced that a home such as Standen reflected and cherished the personality of its owners. His sentiments are part of a nineteenth-century domestic discourse which understood the 'home' environment to be a space which could nurture, develop and even reflect human character and identity.⁵⁶ It was a perception of nineteenth-century domestic space underpinned by the ideology of 'separate spheres', that the home was not only separate from the outside world but also defined by social constriction and tension, particularly in respect of women's lives. These ideas spawned a polemic, gendered interpretation of Victorian domesticity which dominated scholarly thinking on the subject until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

⁵³ Ricardo's 'Arts and Crafts' credentials were substantial just prior to visiting Standen in October of 1898 he had been working in partnership with William De Morgan for ten years designing relief tiles, vases and other artefacts.

⁵⁴ Halsey Ricardo, 'The House in the Country', *The Magazine of Art*, January 1900, 110.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁶ Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd, 'Introduction', in *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, ed. Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 1-17 (2).

Katherine C. Grier, whose influential study of the Victorian parlour published in 1988 favoured an approach based on the material culture of the Victorian parlour, argued that domestic space could be 'read' as a symbolic site representing the struggle and tension between the 'comfort' of home and the 'culture' of the outside world.⁵⁷ Although her interpretation recognised that boundaries between public and private space could be blurred, it still relied on a polemical view of home and outside world. Suggesting an approach which reached beyond the paradigm of 'separate spheres' to challenge entrenched views, Bryden and Floyd's edited volume, *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, argues that the perceived boundaries of 'public and private' relating to interpretations of domestic space 'were mythical and only existed within an 'imaginary geography'.⁵⁸ Their study is not only concerned with the physical space of the house itself but also with examining 'interior architectures' concerned with other perspectives such as the relationship between 'psychologised' space and objects. Their idea that nineteenth-century domestic space was not as private as many supposed, that it 'was continually on view and referenced more places; other spaces' speaks directly to the core of this thesis and how it analyses Standen's domestic space.⁵⁹

Another approach to deconstruct the idea of 'separate spheres', Thad Logan's study of the parlour published in 2001 views Victorian domestic space as a site of reconciliation where conflicting personal tensions relating to gender, identity and status are worked through by its inhabitants.⁶⁰ For Logan, the domestic interior was a space which 'negotiated between the fundamental and disputed oppositions of male and female, public and private, self and other'.⁶¹ Concerned with the materiality of home, she views the nineteenth-century parlour as a material artefact in itself, representing a microcosm of middle-class Victorian life. In a similar way, this study regards Standen and its collection of

⁵⁷ Katherine Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930* (Smithsonian Institution, 2013), 2.

⁵⁸ Inga Bryden and Bryden and Floyd, 'Introduction', 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁰ Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

objects as cultural artefacts which can be interpreted to reveal context and meaning about the identity of the family that once owned them.

While Logan considers the parlour as a condensed version of Victorian life, associated with this perspective are ideas of social convention and how these are performed by inhabitants of domestic space. Juliet Kinchin's research 'Performance and the Reflected Self: Modern Stagings of Domestic Space 1860-1914' of 2008 examines gender performance.⁶² She asserts that issues of gender identity are imperative considerations for an analysis of nineteenth-century domestic space. Her contention that the domestic interior created a stage-like setting for the performance of rituals and conventions associated with gender identity is central to interpretations of feminine and masculine identity discussed in this thesis. Other aspects of domestic ritual are examined through the material culture of domestic space by Jane Hamlett in *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910* of 2010.⁶³ She argues that the domestic spaces people create and the objects they chose for them can both reflect and shape identity, emotions and relationships. These ideas are utilised in Part Six in an analysis of Beale-owned objects which evoke memories of deceased family. Encompassing a wider cultural perspective, Joanna Sofaer investigates social relations in *Material Identities*, 2007. She argues that material objects arranged in the private space of the domestic interior are encoded with meaning to convey social, public identities.⁶⁴ Her concepts provide a framework for examining the themes of Aestheticism and feminine identity discussed in Part Four.

IV. A matter of taste and style

Closely interlinked with theories of domestic space, material culture and gender identity are ideas of artistic style and individual taste. The process of making a space into a home invariably involves the employment of personal taste, a subjective term which carried significant cultural and social meaning in the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the 1970s, a strong emphasis on

⁶² Juliet Kinchin, 'Performance and the Reflected Self: Modern Stagings of Domestic Space 1860-1914', *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 16, no. 1 (2008): 64–91.

⁶³ Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910*, Studies in Design (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 1.

⁶⁴ Joanna R. Sofaer, 'Introduction: Material and Identity', in *Material Identities*, ed. Joanna R. Sofaer (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 2.

Arts and Crafts style has dominated Standen's curatorial policy. This has resulted in the Beales' taste in furnishings and décor which were eclectic, varied, and peppered with representations of Aestheticism, being largely overlooked or dismissed. The subtle connections and interplay between the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic Movements are examined by Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart in *Rethinking the Interior*, a collection of case studies of Victorian interiors published in 2010.⁶⁵ Their argument that the two movements are closely interrelated successfully challenges some of the widely-held views which have traditionally placed them in opposition, such as Aestheticism being less political than Arts and Crafts. Moreover, Edwards and Hart's analysis considers questions of feeling and embodied experience by focussing on the importance of materiality and the way that interiors and objects were arranged, handled and physically experienced by inhabitants and users. Embracing the 'subjectivity, embodiedness and time-specificity of our encounters with interiors',⁶⁶ their 'new' perspective is particularly relevant to this study as it not only relates to the period during which the house was designed and built but it also prompts a new insight into the interpretation of Standen's original décor and furnishings within a social and cultural context. With their approach in mind, this thesis examines Standen's interior decoration and furnishings to question entrenched, traditional perceptions of Standen's 'Arts and Crafts' interior and architecture and how it intersects and overlaps with designs and styles inspired by Aestheticism. By conducting a careful analysis of the house, its archives and indigenous objects to evidence traces of the Beale family's lived experience, it deconstructs the eclectic style of Standen's artistic interiors to question the extent to which the interpretation of Standen, as it is projected today with its strong Arts and Crafts bias, is an accurate reflection of the decorative scheme and taste that the Beales helped to create between 1890 and 1914.

This research is not only significant in the way it redresses the lack of scholarly attention to the Beale family's lived experience of Standen, but also because it focusses on an entirely different and innovative approach, one that is based

⁶⁵ Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart, 'The Victorian Interior: A Collaborative, Eclectic Introduction', in *Rethinking the Interior, c.1867-1896: Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts* (Ashgate Publishing, 2010) 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

upon human experience and material culture rather than architectural design. It interprets Standen's domestic interior as a symbolic space rather than an environment that is 'cut-off' from the outside world or a wider historical context. Standen was first built as a country, holiday home for the Beale family in 1892-4; they kept their London residence at 32 Holland Park, Kensington as their principal home until James Beale retired in 1905. It is therefore inconceivable to investigate the creation of Standen as a separate, 'private sphere' in isolation, without context. Their lived experience of Standen, their 'house in the country', was informed by the other homes, places and environments that were an integral part of their lives, not least their London home.

The opening chapter of this thesis examines Beale family history from the middle of the nineteenth century to build a context for Standen. It investigates the places and ancestors of James and Margaret Beale's family history, concentrating on the social, cultural and religious factors which later informed the creation of Standen and the Beales' subsequent lived experience of the property. Beginning with Birmingham and Leamington Spa in the 1840s then London from 1870, it argues that a sense of place, in particular, childhood homes and the associated themes of ancestry and continuity were crucial to the formation of the family's social and cultural identity. Following on, Part Two examines the historical and geographical context for the location of Standen and the Beales' involvement with the house design. Focussing on their vision of an 'artistic' home in the country, the second section investigates the extent of the Beales' collaboration with Webb, an architect known for his artistic credentials.

Based on the premise that 'artistic' homes were often occupied by 'artistic' or creative home-makers, Part Three features Standen's 'artists'. It investigates the idea that Margaret Beale and her daughter Maggie, Margaret S. Beale (1872-1947) envisioned themselves as the 'artists' of their new country retreat. It examines how their creativity ultimately contributed to the fashioning of Standen, by firstly examining Margaret Beale's passion for nature and her part in creating and nurturing Standen's garden and secondly through Maggie

Beale's artistic taste and her reputation as a 'connoisseur of all things beautiful'.⁶⁷

Accordingly, both women played a crucial part in shaping Standen's artistic interiors, decorative style and furnishing arrangements, a theme discussed in Part Four. Focussing on Margaret Beale's endeavours to create a comfortable, yet stylish home it examines how she furnished and decorated Standen's social and 'public' interior spaces. Through case histories of individual rooms, it discusses how the relationship between the organisation of living space and personal taste was dynamic, shaping and shaped by social identity. It demonstrates that the Beales' choices in decoration and furnishings were not limited, or merely 'quaint', but consisted of a diverse combination of artistic styles: Arts and Crafts layered with Aestheticism featuring antique furniture, *objets d'art*, oriental objects and treasured family possessions, all harmonised and arranged by the Beales to furnish and decorate Standen's interior. The first chapter features some of Standen's principal ground floor rooms to discuss Arts and Crafts contexts which challenged convention: a 'living' Hall shrouded in medieval decorative emblems; the Billiard Room to reveal a shift in traditional perceptions of masculine recreational space and aesthetic visions of Dining Room décor and furnishings projected through the myth of 'Ye Olde England'. The second chapter discusses Aestheticism, another layer of Standen's eclectic and artistic interior by examining the key concepts of 'beauty' and 'harmony', to interpret how certain domestic spaces were intimately linked with constructions of late-nineteenth-century femininity. A case study of the Drawing Room investigates the extent to which its decorative theme was inspired by Aestheticism and how this was reflected in the way that the Beales experienced the space. This is followed by a case study of the Morning Room which interprets a number of Beale family photographs and sketches to demonstrate how furnishings, room décor and fashionable dress framed individual and personal representations of feminine identity.

Part Five focusses on the Beales' travelling and collecting pursuits; it examines the places they visited and the objects they collected. It scrutinises how they

⁶⁷ Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories, Part II, "More about the People"', c 1990, 17, Digital Archive, NTS.

hunted for antique furniture in England, gathered *objets d'art* in Europe and sought out authentic, exotic and oriental wares during their world tour. Enriched by stories of the family's experience of travel, these objects are interpreted through the lens of connoisseurship to demonstrate how they contributed to amassing another essential element of Standen's eclectic and distinct interior. Lastly, Part Six concentrates on family history and identity to highlight and contextualise some of the Beales' treasured family possessions and refashioned furniture. It discusses how these objects, as material traces of the Beale family's lived experience were integral to the formation of family identity and social status. It illustrates that these objects not only represented bonds of kinship and family affection but that they were also embedded with symbolic meaning or markers of identity that were recognised, shared and valued within a wider social context.

Part One: Dwelling on family history 1840-1890

1.1 The early years: Birmingham and Leamington

‘...some of us saw it in our dreams years afterwards as one does a house known in childhood’.⁶⁸

The evocative power of a childhood home was described by Georgiana Burne-Jones in 1904 *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, as she recalled her feelings about Red House after it was sold in 1865. A geographical location, a family home or familiar building can in itself represent a physical manifestation of treasured memories. In order to build a historical context for the creation of Standen, a multidisciplinary view of ‘place’ and its integral relationship with identity provides a lens through which to analyse Beale family history. An understanding of the significance of ‘place’ is succinctly explained by Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davis in their Introduction to *Making Sense of Place*, a study which draws on the work of social scientist Penelope Harvey:

Place is bound up in people’s sources of meaning and experience; people and their environments, places and identities are mutually constructed and constituted.⁶⁹

In short, ‘place’ as a site of lived experience cannot be separated from the activities and lives of its inhabitants.⁷⁰ Standen is therefore viewed in this dissertation as a place shaped by lived experience which should be separated neither from the history of the Beale family nor the places of their past.

The influential places of James Samuel Beale’s (1840-1912) (Fig. 7) early family history were the congregation of the Old Meeting House Unitarian Chapel in Birmingham and ‘Westbourne’, his childhood home in Edgbaston. Similarly, the early history of his wife, Margaret Beale, née Field (1847-1936) (Fig. 8) was bound up with her Unitarian roots and a fondness for Blackdown, her childhood home in Leamington Spa. She also had a life-long interest in family heritage, in

⁶⁸ Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, 1840-1920*, vol. 1 (London : Macmillan, 1904), 294.

⁶⁹ Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane, and Peter Davis, ‘Introduction: Making Sense of Place’, in *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Boydell Press, 2012), 1.

⁷⁰ Peggy Teo and Shirlena Huang, ‘A Sense of Place in Public Housing: A Case Study of Pasir Ris, Singapore’, *Habitat International*, 20 (1996), 307–325. Cited in Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davis, *Making Sense of Place*, 1.

particular her family's descent from their notable puritan ancestor Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). The Beale and Field families were connected through the Unitarian faith, a history which for James Beale began in Birmingham.

To walk through the graveyard, and to read the names upon the tombstones, is like reading the history of Birmingham for nearly two centuries. Most of the names familiar to Birmingham men are to be found there, family by family, generation after generation.⁷¹

The words of a local writer quoted in a memorial history of the Old Meeting House by Catherine Hutton Beale, emphasise how the chapel and its cemetery represent some of the most important and powerful people in the history of Birmingham.⁷² Published in 1881, the book was written by James Beale's cousin, Catherine Hutton Beale, at the time the Old Meeting House and its land was being acquired by the London and North Western Railway Company to accommodate Birmingham New Street Station. James and Margaret Beale were listed subscribers to Hutton Beale's memorial, an indication of their active interest in family heritage. Such a publication would have provided them with a perception of their past family history and a historical narrative which could be appropriated for use in their present lives.⁷³ The memorial reveals that James Beale's family history was linked to a complex network of powerful Unitarian families associated through the Old Meeting House congregation. It recorded that several generations of the Beale family were buried in the cemetery, not only providing evidence of Beale family continuity but also aligning their status with many of Birmingham's prominent and influential Unitarians laid to rest there, such as the Ryland and Phipson families.

James Beale's paternal grandfather, William Beale (1770-1848) of Camp Hill, and his three wives, Sarah (1772-1822), Mary (1779-1828) and Ann (1770-1865), were buried in Plot No.58 with his first daughter Mary Beale (1798-1816) who died in her teenage years.⁷⁴ William and Ann Beale (née Colmore) were James Beale's grandparents, described later by one commentator as 'better class residents' who lived in a large house surrounded by grounds at Camphill

⁷¹ Catherine Hutton Beale, *Memorials of the Old Meeting House and Burial Ground, Birmingham* (Birmingham: White and Pike, 1882), 62.

⁷² Catherine was the wife of William Franks Beale (Son of Samuel (1803-1874) and daughter of historian and Unitarian William Hutton (1823-1815).

⁷³ Jürgen Straub, *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness* (Berghahn Books, 2005), 64.

⁷⁴ Beale, *Memorials of the Old Meeting House and Burial Ground, Birmingham, The Graveyard*.

off the Stratford Road.⁷⁵ They clearly belonged to Birmingham's wealthy middle-class, a description their house which was recorded in an auction sale after their death records five bedrooms, one with a dressing room, a Drawing Room, Dining Room and Breakfast Room.⁷⁶ It also had a Library, Carriage House, Stable and a garden, complete with its own green-house. They owned a set of dining tables in Spanish mahogany and fourteen mahogany chairs with turned legs and hair seats covered in leather which perhaps inspired the Beales later choice of dining table and chairs for Standen also made from Spanish mahogany.⁷⁷

Many aspects of William and Ann Beale's lives were characterised and shaped by political and social Unitarian networks. William was an active participant in Birmingham's civic life, especially in areas of law reform. He often attended meetings of townspeople to discuss community life and campaigned for improvements, such as petitioning the government on the reduction of crime in the district in 1821.⁷⁸ By 1822 he was Low Bailiff of Birmingham, a powerful and traditional office which virtually controlled the appointment of all paid officials through its responsibility to summon the annual court-leet and choose a jury.⁷⁹ By the latter half of the nineteenth century, many of its offices had been held by Unitarians like William Beale, who were also members of the Old Meeting Congregation.⁸⁰ They attended services at the New Meeting House Chapel, rebuilt after the Old Meeting House had been completely destroyed in the anti-dissenter riots of 1791.⁸¹ In the first half of the nineteenth century its congregation would have been mainly middle-class businessmen, county families and occasionally a member of the aristocracy.⁸² Thomas Ryland (1769-1844), for example, businessman and owner of a silver-plating company was

⁷⁵ John Charles Cox, ed., 'Proceedings and Publications of Archaeological Societies.' *The Antiquary*, 23 (1891), 223–227 (226).

⁷⁶ 'Catalogue of the Sale Contents of the House of the Late William Beale at Stratford Road, Camp Hill', 1865, MS 3597/116/9-10, BCA.

⁷⁷ Beale Marigold & Beale, 'Catalogue of the Whole of the Household Furniture of Camp Hill, on the Stratford Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham', 28 March 1865, MS 3597/116/9-10, BCA.

⁷⁸ May 11th 1821 A Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town & Neighbourhood of Birmingham in John Alfred Langford, *A Century of Birmingham Life: Or, A Chronicle of Local Events, from 1741 to 1841.*, 2d ed. (Birmingham: W.G. Moore & Co., 1871), 357.

⁷⁹ James Drake, *The Picture of Birmingham*, 2nd ed. (Drake, 1831), 26.

⁸⁰ R. V. Holt, *The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England* (Allen & Unwin, 1938), 226.

⁸¹ Beale, *Memorials of the Old Meeting House and Burial Ground, Birmingham*, 35.

⁸² Holt, *The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England*, 331.

Low Bailiff in 1820; he was also the uncle of James Beale's mother Martha Beale, née Phipson. For worshipping families like the Rylands, Phipsons and Beales, their attendance at chapel united their families by demonstrating shared values and religious beliefs. The personal relationships forged at the Old Meeting House were bonded further by an underlying sense of exclusion resulting from many years overshadowed by religious persecution.⁸³

As individuals, Unitarians were noted for their 'intense regard for respectability' and traditional manners, attributes which often contrasted with their radical outlook and reforming zeal.⁸⁴ William Beale was a Unitarian who was not afraid to stand up for humanitarian reform, not only in local affairs, but in issues of national importance, such as Anti-Slavery Reforms. As Low Bailiff, he seconded a motion at a meeting of townsmen on 12 May 1823 supporting anti-slavery reform 'on the grounds that slavery was inconsistent with Christianity'. At that meeting he publicly expressed his humanitarian views on the subject, calling for a change in the law,

As a nation we were imperatively called upon to make such regulations, and to pass such laws as should put an end to a system so demoralising to our fellow men.⁸⁵

Besides his political interests, William Beale was an influential Birmingham businessman; described as 'one of the oldest and most respected members of the town', he became a director of the Midland Railway in 1835.⁸⁶ His son, William John Beale (1807-1883) (Fig. 9), clearly inherited an interest in humanitarian causes and a sense of civic duty from his father. He was a liberal-minded Unitarian he took a keen interest in politics, culture and civic affairs. Not only was he associated with the General Hospital but also in the organisation of the town's Musical Festivals, having been a member of the Orchestral Committee for many years.⁸⁷ He was also a committee member of the National Education League; formed in 1869, it included many prominent Unitarians, some of whom were civic leaders and members of the Old Meeting House

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Langford, *A Century of Birmingham Life*, 2:452.

⁸⁶ Frederick Smeeton Williams, *The Midland Railway: Its Rise and Progress: A Narrative of Modern Enterprise* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 61.

⁸⁷ Walter Showell, *Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham* (J G Hammond & Co, 1886).

congregation, such as Baker, Crosskey, Kenrick and Ryland.⁸⁸ At the outset, their aim was to draw up a scheme 'to bring a good education within the reach of even the poorest and most neglected children in the country.'⁸⁹ As a supporter of civic reform, William John Beale made his views known locally when the Municipal Corporation Reform Bill was rejected by the House of Lords in 1835. Attending a public meeting on the 8 August that year at Birmingham Town Hall, he proposed one of the three resolutions, seconded by his father-in-law, William Phipson to register 'indignation' at the House of Lords' interference.⁹⁰

In 1842 William John Beale went into partnership with Thomas Colmore, forming Colmore and Beale Solicitors practising at 20 Waterloo Street, Birmingham.⁹¹ The Beales' were already linked to the Colmore family; Thomas Colmore had witnessed William John Beale's father's marriage to Ann Colmore in 1830.⁹² The Beale and Colmore legal partnership managed the Colmore Estates, a prime example of how family connections and networks were crucial in elevating family status and furthering local business success.⁹³ Such connections would have been fostered and developed through the Unitarian families who worshipped at the New Meeting House Chapel. When Thomas Colmore retired from the practice in the late 1850s, William John Beale took James Marigold into partnership, naming the firm Beale and Marigold.

In 1837, William John Beale had married Martha Phipson (1812-1883) (Fig. 10) and moved into 'Courtlands', a house in Harborne Road, Birmingham. Whilst living there, three children had arrived in quick succession, Elizabeth Sarah Beale (1838-1930), William Phipson Beale (1839-1922) and James Samuel Beale in 1840.⁹⁴ They were comfortably wealthy; an indication of the family's

⁸⁸ National Education League, 'Report of the First General Meeting of Members of the National Education League', Birmingham, October 12 & 13, 1869, 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁰ Langford, *A Century of Birmingham Life*, 2:650.

⁹¹ 'Edgbastonian Past and Present', *Edgbastonia: A Monthly Local Magazine*, October 1894, 146, CIMG1396, BFP.

⁹² 'Birmingham, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1937' (Provo, UT, USA, 2013), DRO41 M83, BCA.

⁹³ Andrew Rowley, 'Beale Family (per. c.1836-1912)', ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), accessed 18 September 2013. www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/49729.

⁹⁴ '1841 England Census' (Ancestry.com Operations, 2010), Class: HO107; Piece: 1151; Book: 3; Civil Parish: Edgbaston; County: Warwickshire; Enumeration District: 7; Folio: 6; Page: 4; Line: 15; GSU roll: 464186, TNA.

middle-class status, recorded by the 1841 census, was their ability to employ three female servants at this address. The immediate area surrounding the house in Harborne Road, Edgbaston offered a range of cultural pursuits that appealed to wealthy residents, such as a 'tastefully laid out Bowling Green and Quoit-Ground' for members, a 'Subscription Establishment' that was well attended in the season.⁹⁵ It was the beginning of a period when the middle-classes experienced rising affluence and began to enjoy an increase in their disposable income which allowed them to patronise the arts. In 1871, William John Beale was recorded as being the donor of a painting entitled *The Burning of York Minster* by Henry Harris dated c. 1830, to the Birmingham Free Library and Art Gallery.⁹⁶ By the early 1850s, following the births of James Beale's younger brother, Charles Gabriel (1843-1912) and his sister, Mary Emma (1848-1892), the family moved to a house in nearby Westbourne Road, Edgbaston (Fig. 11).

This property was next door to James's maternal grandparents, William (1770-1845) and Elizabeth (1775-1862) Phipson, one of the wealthy families of the area who had lived there since the mid-1830s. The estate was considered to be a desirable neighbourhood for wealthy residents. As early as 1836, local historian William Hutton wrote that it was;

[...] a favourite place of retreat to those who have basked in the sunshine of commercial prosperity. The salubrity of the air and the dryness of the soil, the exclusion of manufacturers and small houses render it a pleasant residence for persons of wealth.⁹⁷

Next door to the Phipsons, Botanical Gardens had opened to the public in 1832 with four glass-houses to accommodate specimens of rare and exotic plants.⁹⁸ It is possible that memories of such a prestigious garden located within walking distance to his home resurfaced later when James and Margaret Beale began to acquire exotic plants for Standen's Conservatory. As business proprietors in

⁹⁵ Drake, *The Picture of Birmingham*, 117.

⁹⁶ John Alfred Langford, *The Birmingham Free Libraries, the Shakespeare Memorial Library, and the Art Gallery* (Birmingham: Hall & English, 1871), 73.

⁹⁷ William Hutton and James Guest (of Birmingham England.), *The History of Birmingham* (Wrightson and Webb, 1836), 458.

⁹⁸ They had been designed by John Loudon on the site of Holly Farm in William Dargue, 'Edgbaston - History of Birmingham Places & Placenames A to Y', 2012 2008, accessed 10 October 2013. <http://billdargue.jimdo.com/placenames-gazetteer-a-to-y/places-e/edgbaston/>.

metal-rolling the Phipsons were sufficiently prosperous to commission a portrait of William Phipson in 1831 by Thomas Phillips (1770-1845) (Fig. 12). Phillips was a skilled portrait artist who painted great men of the era, such as the eminent scientist, Michael Faraday in 1842. Ownership of art was important to businessmen like William Phipson; it was one of the ways they affirmed their affluent middle-class identity and ensured a lasting legacy.⁹⁹ When the painting was loaned it to the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery for an exhibition in 1900, the catalogue entry described Phipson as ‘a well-known Birmingham citizen, who took a leading part in all matters concerning the welfare and progress of the town’ emphasising his social standing and civic achievements. In cultivating a preference for living artists like Phillips, the Phipsons were clearly not emulating the cultural tastes of the aristocracy; instead they were seeking to distinguish themselves from that class by venturing away from the ‘high art’ of the old masters.¹⁰⁰ They were in good company; living at ‘The Grove’, the house next door, were the renowned pen makers and prolific art patrons, Joseph and Maria Gillott who amassed a huge collection of paintings by English contemporary artists, such as Turner and Etty.¹⁰¹

William John Beale’s house in Westbourne Road was spacious enough to accommodate a growing family and four female servants. There was even space enough for him to indulge in his pastime of amateur dramatics; according to one newspaper journalist, at W.J. Beale’s in the Westbourne Road, there was ‘a very nice little theatre’.¹⁰² Local dignitaries such as Joseph Chamberlain, Mayor of Birmingham from 1873-1876 and Thomas Martineau, Mayor from 1884-87, gathered there for ‘dramatic evenings’ throughout the 1870s.¹⁰³ Hence, James Beale’s upbringing not only encouraged him to appreciate an interest in art and culture but it also instilled a modern outlook. It was a characteristic which later manifested when the Beales made decisions about

⁹⁹ Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰¹ After Gillott died in 1872, the Grove was rebuilt for the Kenrick family. Its panelled Ante-Room designed by architect J H Chamberlain is now on display in the V & A, British Galleries.

¹⁰² ‘Mr. Chamberlain As An Actor.’ *The Press*, 10 September 1889, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand, 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2.

Standen's design and internal decoration, especially in relation to embracing modern technologies for the house, a subject examined in Part Four.

James Beale's progressive thinking was also encouraged by his schooling; he attended Edgbaston Proprietary School at Five-Ways and sat the newly-established Oxford Middle Class examinations when he was eighteen.¹⁰⁴

Founded in 1837, the school was one of the advanced Proprietary institutions pioneered by Unitarians to promote a liberal, modern scheme of education.¹⁰⁵

The years that young James Beale spent living in Westbourne Road clearly left a lasting impression on him; 'Westbourne' was the name later given to one of the First Floor guest bedrooms at Standen. Moreover, his father's love of the theatre was later echoed at Standen when his own family staged charades and plays in the Drawing Room. According to census records James was still living in Westbourne Road in 1861 and was employed as a solicitor's clerk.¹⁰⁶ It would seem that he had been engaged by the family firm, qualifying as a solicitor by 1866, alongside his younger brother, Charles Gabriel. Once the two brothers joined, the company was renamed Beale, Marigold & Beale, specialising in legal work for the Midland Railway with premises at 3 Newhall Street, Birmingham.¹⁰⁷ When business increased due to the development of the Midland Railway's St Pancras Station, James Beale was chosen to run a London office at 28 Great George Street, Westminster, a venue ideally located in the city's 'legal suburbs'.¹⁰⁸

With his sons now working for Beale & Co., William John Beale planned his retirement, building a new house in the Welsh countryside on the north side of the river Mawdach between Dolgelly and Barmouth. 'Bryntirion' in Merionethshire (now part of the County of Gwynedd), was built from the charred remains of an old country house damaged by fire in the 1840s (Fig. 13).¹⁰⁹ It was designed by Andrew B. Phipson, a Birmingham architect and cousin of

¹⁰⁴ *The Literary and Educational Year Book* (Kent & Co. Paternoster Row, London, 1859), 142.

¹⁰⁵ Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England, 1760-1860* (Routledge, 2014), 137.

¹⁰⁶ '1861 England Census' (Ancestry.com Operations, 2005), Class RG 9; Piece: 2124; Folio: 15; Page: 23; GSU roll: 542921, TNA.

¹⁰⁷ Beale & Co., 'Clients Papers - Administrative History' (TNA, 1820-1942), MS 3, BCA.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Mayhew, *The Great World of London: (Part IX)* (London: David Bogue, 1857), 75.

¹⁰⁹ 'Residence, "Bryntirion," Merionethshire.' *British Architect*, 1874-1919 1, no. 6 (6 February 1874): 90.

Martha, William John's wife. The remains of the old house were utilised when the new dwelling was erected in the early 1870s. Where possible, Phipson preserved parts of the old building; the walls of Bryntirion were built of local green stone quarried on the estate with random square-faced ashlar of the same material.¹¹⁰ It was an idea reaffirmed much later when Webb designed Standen in 1891 with stone used for building the house being quarried on site. The design of Bryntirion has the look of a neo-Gothic chateau, especially with its lancet window arches and castle style battlements to the rear. A.B. Phipson would have been a natural choice of architect for William John Beale; besides being a member of his wife's family, he was part of the Old Meeting House congregation and knew the Welsh countryside, having originated from Cardiff in 1821. Moreover, he had a proven track record in Birmingham, being the architect responsible for the Unitarian Sunday School on Fazeley Street in 1865. Significantly, he was also a member of the Birmingham Architectural Society, an organisation founded in 1851 that was committed to preserving 'architectural art of a past age'.¹¹¹ The notion that historic architecture should be described as art anticipates the ideas of William Morris and the objectives of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [SPAB] founded in 1877 and is discussed further in Part Two.

Commencing in 1871, just after the Beale's eldest child Amy was born, Bryntirion was a favourite destination for family summer holidays.¹¹² Besides enjoying outdoor recreation, it was a chance to spend time with relations, as a photograph c.1873 of James Beale with his parents and siblings outside Bryntirion illustrates (Fig. 14). Holidays at Bryntirion enabled the renewal of kinship ties, as a later photograph c.1883 of Maggie Beale sat with her Aunt Polly (Mary Emma Beale) in the garden illustrates (Fig. 15). Furthermore, the countryside offered opportunities to be creative and active, such as sketching (Fig. 16), and fishing or even paddling in the river (Fig. 17). While the population of towns and cities were rising, a visit to the country became an increasingly

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ 'Notes of the Month: Preservation of Aston Hall', *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, vol. 21, (London: William Knott, 1858), 208.

¹¹² Margaret Beale, 'List of Places Visited for Summer Holidays and Xmas from 1870 to 1892', 1892, 1, Travel, BFP.

important form of leisure and a way to connect with England's rural past.¹¹³ For James and Margaret Beale, the countryside around Bryntirion represented an idyll, unspoilt by the onslaught of industrialisation, the essence of which is captured in family photographs such as *Cadar Idris from Bryntirion* (Fig. 18). The extensive countryside environment surrounding Bryntirion would certainly have been appreciated by Margaret Beale. Her family history was centred on the Parish of Leamington near Warwick, which, despite its rapid growth as a spa town, still retained its rural character.¹¹⁴

Margaret Beale was the eldest daughter of solicitor Algernon Sydney Field (1813-1907), and his wife Sarah, née Martin (1814-1900). Margaret's keen interest in family ancestry was inherited from her father and grandfather, especially her descent from Oliver Cromwell. Algernon Sydney's *Reminiscences* recorded the pride his father felt about his notable ancestor: "I should be prouder of a descent from Oliver Cromwell than from any crowned head in Europe".¹¹⁵ As the Beale Family Tree in Appendix B illustrates, the link was through her paternal, great grandfather John Field (1719-1722), a London Apothecary who married Ann Tidman Cromwell (1727-1797). Ann's parents were Frances Tidman (1699-1739) and Thomas Cromwell (1699-1748). Thomas Cromwell was Oliver Cromwell's Great Grandson. This historical connection was an important marker of social status for the Beales, reaffirmed later through the display of Cromwell portrait paintings at Standen, a theme examined in Part Four.

One of John Field's four sons, the Reverend William Field (1768-1851) (Fig. 19) was a scholar of the classics and devoted much of his life to the Unitarian religion. He first studied for the Ministry in London at Homerton Academy, moving in 1788 to Daventry for a year, an Academy for Dissenters under Thomas Belsham.¹¹⁶ It was probably the place where he first got to know the dissenting theologian and politician Joseph Priestley. When William Field was ordained as Minister of High Street Chapel in Warwick in 1790, Belsham

¹¹³ Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Routledge, 2012), 13.

¹¹⁴ John Beck, *Beck's Leamington Guide*, 10th ed. (Leamington: J. Beck, 1852), 25.

¹¹⁵ A. S. Field, *Reminiscences of Early Life* (A. Tones, 1901), 6.

¹¹⁶ R.K. Webb, 'Field, William (1768-1851)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

conducted the service and Priestley preached. Significantly Priestley was then Minister at the New Meeting Chapel in Birmingham where the Beale family worshipped. The Field family connection to Joseph Priestley was later honoured by James Beale when he purchased from Madam Belloc a set of dining room chairs for Standen which had once belonged to her grandfather, Dr. Priestley.¹¹⁷ Although the chairs are no longer part of the house collection, they were part of the family's treasured possessions integrated into Standen's decorative interior to become part of its eclectic mix of decoration and furnishings, a theme discussed in Part Five.

William Field married Mary Wilkins (1782-1848) in 1803 and moved into 'Leam House' situated half-way between Warwick and Leamington, depicted in a family pencil sketch of 1837 (Fig. 20). Here they opened a boy's school where they educated their fourteen children.¹¹⁸ Although William managed to publish a number of books, the principal one being his *Memoirs ofSamuel Parr of 1828*, they always found it difficult to make ends meet, not least because they never earned much money from the school.¹¹⁹

The memoirs of William Fields's son, Algernon Sydney Field (1813-1907) (Fig. 21), recall how anxiety over family finances shaped his personality, in particular his frugal attitude to money:

These scenes sank deeply into my heart and influenced my character for life, influenced it desirably perhaps on the whole, but induced, perhaps, some excess of economy'¹²⁰

It is likely that his parent's entrenched concerns over financial matters filtered down from Algernon Sydney Field to his own children, especially his eldest child Margaret, who later diligently maintained detailed account books of household expenditure after she married.¹²¹ It was a practice she continued at Standen; to organise the furnishing and decorating of the new house she kept *Holly Bush*

¹¹⁷ Helen Beale, 'Personal Notebook - Family Things', c 1970, 2, Digital Ref: P1030286, BFP.

¹¹⁸ H. McLachlan, 'Recollections by Sarah Dendy Née Beard', in *Records of a Family 1800-1933 Pioneers in Education, Social Service & Liberal Religion* (Manchester University Press, 1935), 116.

¹¹⁹ Field, *Reminiscences of Early Life*, 10.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²¹ For example see Margaret Beale, 'Account Book', 1873, Holland Park File, BFP.

Furnishing Book from 1894, a room-by-room list of items purchased and a note of their cost.¹²²

Although the school at Leam was not particularly profitable, by the time that Algernon Sydney Field and his older brother, Edwin Wilkins Field (1804-1871) were being educated, early in the nineteenth-century, it had 'attained a considerable reputation'.¹²³ Joseph Parkes, a fellow Unitarian who was also a solicitor and legal reformer had persuaded William Field to allow Edwin to be sent to London as an articled clerk for Taylor and Roscoe.¹²⁴ Once qualified, in 1826, Edwin Wilkins Field set up business with W. Sharpe, employing his brother, Algernon Sydney Field in 1829 as an articled clerk. Their accommodation was situated over the office in Bread Street, Cheapside, described later in Algernon Sydney's memoirs as 'a dismal house in a dismal street'.¹²⁵

Once Algernon Sydney Field qualified, in 1834 he opened an office at 42 Warwick Street in Leamington Priors to start his own legal practice.¹²⁶ It did not take long for him to become established in Leamington Priors, culminating in his appointment as Clerk to the Magistrates for the Kenilworth division in 1840. He married Sarah Martin (1814-1900) (Fig. 22) in 1846 and within a decade they had a family of five, two girls and three boys. During this time, he had also purchased Blackdown Hill, the site where he built his family home.¹²⁷

Blackdown in Lillington was a large country house set in its own grounds located just outside Leamington Spa (Fig. 23). Algernon Sydney Field's *Reminiscences* describe the remote location of the property: 'it was very far out in the wilds when I bought it and the roads so bad as to be almost impassable'.¹²⁸ However, its isolated, country setting must only have enhanced Algernon Sydney's vision of Blackdown as a future symbol of family heritage, as he recorded in his memoirs:

¹²² Margaret Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', c 1894, Box 8, Safe Archive, NTS.

¹²³ McLachlan, 'Recollections by Sarah Dendy Née Beard', 116.

¹²⁴ Thomas Sadler, *Edwin Wilkins Field, a Memorial Sketch* (Macmillan & Co, 1872), 3.

¹²⁵ Field, *Reminiscences of Early Life*, 21.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

I hoped the house might be the home of some of my descendants for many years, and so the three eldest, Margaret, William and Edward laid the three corner stones which bear their initials.¹²⁹

Algernon Sydney's choice of location for Blackdown was inspired by the countryside, as he recorded: 'I always loved the country, and, during the latter years of my town life, I sighed for it'.¹³⁰ His enthusiasm for the countryside was clearly inherited by his daughter Margaret who was later undeterred or possibly even encouraged by seclusion and privacy when choosing a suitable site to build Standen.

In her teenage years, Margaret Field attended a private school for ladies called Elmsdale, located in Abbey Road, Great Malvern, founded in 1857 by Miss Caroline Cooper (Fig. 24). Advertised in the *Athenaeum* in 1866 as 'an old established first-class school where only pupils of good social position were received',¹³¹ Margaret studied there from 1859 to 1863 together with her younger sister Mary Elizabeth Field (1852-1929). It was a locality that served the wealthy classes; beside its celebrated health-giving waters, Great Malvern had many advantages, according to an 1861 Visitor's Guide, its high quality houses, 'with few exceptions [were] built detached and on plots of ground sufficiently large to leave each a garden or shrubbery, or both'.¹³² Despite the salubrious environment of Malvern, Margaret's letters to her parents reveal that she could not wait to get back to Blackdown when the holidays drew near:

We are all right but very wild for the holidays seem so near almost quite close, we have a large list in our room of the days and we scratch out one every day.¹³³

Boarding at school probably intensified Margaret's fondness for her childhood home. For her, Blackdown was not only imbued with emotional meaning, but it was also a symbol of status and family continuity, especially when it was later enjoyed by future generations. Significantly, when Algernon Sydney Field and his wife Sarah celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1896, three generations of family gathered in front of Blackdown for a group photograph to

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 80.

¹³¹ 'Great Malvern [Advertisement]', *The Athenaeum: A Journal of Literature, Science, the Fine Arts, Music, and the Drama*, no. 2019 (7 July 1866): 1.

¹³² *The Visitors' Guide to Malvern* (H.W. Lamb, The Library, 1861), 5.

¹³³ Margaret Field, 'My Darling Mother', 27 May 1863, 6, CIMG0099, BFP.

commemorate the occasion (Fig. 25). It is quite likely that her father's aspiration for his family home resonated with Margaret when she came to later visualise plans for her own country home.

After James Beale proposed to Margaret Field early in January 1870, his mother Martha wrote to Margaret's mother, Sarah Field. Although she understood how difficult it would be for Sarah when Margaret left home to live in the city, she commiserated by observing that geographical distance was easily overcome as: 'London is not so very far off and access is so easy now'.¹³⁴ The convenience of train travel was clearly part of rising middle-class prosperity and accepted in the everyday routine for wealthy families like the Beales and the Fields. The families had known each other for some time, as Martha recalled: 'her [Margaret Field] father's family were amongst the earliest and kindest friends I can remember'.¹³⁵ Later that month James Beale visited the Fields at Blackdown to discuss wedding arrangements and the young couple married three months later at St Mary Magdalene Church in Lillington. It was a mile or so from Blackdown where they probably held the Wedding reception after the ceremony.¹³⁶ After they were married, they spent their first Christmas at Blackdown and Margaret Beale stayed there when Amy Elizabeth Beale, their first child was born in 1871 (Fig. 26).¹³⁷ Many other important family occasions were celebrated at Blackdown, such as Margaret Beale's sister's wedding in 1886 to Edwin Clifford Beale (1851-1953), the brother of James Beale, illustrated in a family photograph (Fig. 27). Blackdown and its family associations remained hugely influential throughout Margaret's life. Growing up there would certainly have been instrumental in formulating her character and artistic inspiration, especially in relation to her interest in gardening and nature, a subject explored in more depth in Part Three.

¹³⁴ Martha Beale, 'My Dear Friend [letter Sent to Sarah Field from Westbourne Road]', 10 January 1870, 2, CIMG0285, BFP.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ 'Record of Marriage, 19th April 1870, James Beale & Margaret Field' (Warwick County Records, 1870), Parish Church of Lillington.

¹³⁷ '1871 England Census' (Ancestry.com Operations, 2004), Class: RG10; Piece: 3202; Folio: 68; Page: 19; GSU roll: 839257, TNA.

1.2 The London Years

After they married in 1870, James and Margaret Beale started their new life with a move to 41 Gordon Square, Bloomsbury; a four-storeyed, terraced house including basement (Fig. 28). It was large enough to accommodate a growing family of four children; Amy, Margaret, John and Sydney, all born within the next five years. The house had a pleasant aspect positioned on the northern part of the east side overlooking an enclosed garden area at the centre of the Square.¹³⁸ Although its location was lacking in prestige when compared to other fashionable developments nearby, it had been built 'to a level of style and quality unprecedented among other speculative builders.'¹³⁹ It may have been something to do with the length of time it took to build the development; the plans were devised in 1829 and the houses only completed thirty years later.¹⁴⁰ However, at the start of their married life, it was not the need for a fashionable address which influenced their choice of residence. Other factors were clearly important, such as its proximity to business, as well as family, religious and cultural connections. James Beale's new office was only a few miles away and St. Pancras Station within easy reach. Whilst settling into an unfamiliar environment it would have been important for the Beales to make social connections and allegiances to consolidate their status and establish their position within the professional classes of the city. Their family background and James' training as a lawyer dictated that they were part of the professional middle-classes. Law was one of the 'old' professions which naturally bestowed gentlemanly status, largely through being associated with a formal education and years of training.¹⁴¹ Mindful of their religious affiliations, it was perhaps no coincidence that the Beales chose an area with Unitarian links, one that had been increasingly populated by intellectuals and reforming educational and cultural institutions since the 1820s.¹⁴² Gordon Square was on the doorstep of

¹³⁸ J R Howard Roberts and Walter H Godfrey, eds., *'Gordon Square', Survey of London, Vol.21: The Parish of St Pancras Part 3: Tottenham Court Road & Neighbourhood*, 1949, 51.

¹³⁹ 'History of Russell Square', *London Borough Camden*, 29 May 2013, accessed 20 June 2013. www.camden.gov.uk/print/ccm/content/leisure/outdoor-camden/parks/history-of-russell-square.en.

¹⁴⁰ Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century* (Random House, 2008), 72.

¹⁴¹ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (Yale University Press, 2008), 11.

¹⁴² Rosemary Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (Yale University Press, 2012), 59.

University College London in Gower Street, notable for its links to Unitarian, and artistic networks, in particular Margaret's uncle Edwin Wilkins Field (Fig. 29).

The University's strong associations with Unitarianism were manifest in the building of University Hall in 1848. It was funded with Unitarian donations, some of which were collected by Edwin Wilkins Field who was now a prominent London solicitor and law reformer working in nearby Lincoln's Inn Fields. He had been one of the active lobbyists instrumental in getting the Dissenters' Chapel Act passed in 1844,¹⁴³ which University Hall was built to commemorate.¹⁴⁴

Professionally, he was renowned for his interest in dissenters' property rights and the protection of artists' work through his involvement in the Fine Arts Copyright Act of 1862.¹⁴⁵ However, Edwin Wilkins Field's interest in the arts was not only connected with business, he was also a patron and amateur painter. He collected works and socialised with eminent artists, such as John Constable (1776-1837), his friend and Hampstead neighbour who painted *Branch Hill Pond, Hampstead Heath, with a cart and carters* c.1825. Edwin Wilkins Field purchased this work in 1866, and inscribed a stretcher on the back affirming his acquaintance with the artist.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, Edwin Wilkins Field was instrumental in establishing the Flaxman Gallery, and the Slade School of Fine Art at University College. Long before Felix Slade died, Field had championed the idea of setting up a University-based Faculty of Art which offered students the opportunity to make art studies from life.¹⁴⁷ When the Felix Slade bequest was announced, Edwin Wilkins Field got the chance to realise his ideas and accepted an invitation to join the organising committee, diligently working to help achieve the foundation of the Slade School of Fine Art in 1868.¹⁴⁸ In his leisure time, Edwin Wilkins painted landscapes reflecting his interest in history

¹⁴³ The statute was designed to protect the funds and meeting places of Unitarians Andrea Greenwood and Mark W. Harris, *An Introduction to the Unitarian and Universalist Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 48.

¹⁴⁴ Ian D. MacKillop, *The British Ethical Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 13.

¹⁴⁵ Sadler, *Edwin Wilkins Field, a Memorial Sketch*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Leslie Parris and John Constable, *The Tate Gallery Constable Collection: A Catalogue* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1981), NO4237.

¹⁴⁷ Sadler, *Edwin Wilkins Field, a Memorial Sketch*, 94.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

and the changing countryside, such as *Preparing to pull down Evesham Bridge*, a watercolour dated 1854.¹⁴⁹

In 1870, Edwin Wilkins Field had written to congratulate his brother 'Sydney' [Algernon Sydney] on Margaret Field's engagement to James Beale. Although he had not met James, he wrote that he must be 'a rara avis'¹⁵⁰ to be worthy of Margaret, who he thought of like a daughter.¹⁵¹ He invited the young couple to stay with him if they needed accommodation in town and encouraged them to look for a permanent residence in Hampstead. He was part of a family circle which played a key role in establishing the couple's social status, in particular, by introducing them to some of the people who frequented his influential and artistic social network. He lived at 'Squires Mount', an impressive country house and home that would have reminded the young couple of the secluded homes of their childhood. Complete with a bowling green, croquet lawn, flower garden and Conservatory, a view of the Heath with Caen Wood and Highgate beyond could be seen through tall Elm trees.¹⁵² Indoors, all the walls were covered with pictures, amongst which antique vases, busts and Flaxman sculptures nestled; downstairs were portfolios containing a collection of engravings and drawings.¹⁵³

Hampstead was an area known to be inhabited and frequented by cultured society.¹⁵⁴ As one of the originators of a *Conversazione Society* which met chiefly to discuss art and science, Edwin Wilkins was passionate about art. In an address to one meeting he urged his audience: 'Develop a love of art in every way. Encourage it in yourself and your children and everybody.'¹⁵⁵ He certainly encouraged his family, after attending University College School, his son Walter Field (1837-1901) trained at The Royal Academy, exhibiting there

¹⁴⁹ Evesham was especially significant to the Field family and its ancestral links to Oliver Cromwell the events of 1644. It may have been painted when Field visited his younger brother Ferdinand who lived in the Vale of Evesham.

¹⁵⁰ Literally translated as 'rare bird', meaning rare person.

¹⁵¹ Edwin Wilkins Field, 'Dear Sydney, [letter Sent from Squires Mount]', 11 January 1870, 1, CIMG0310, BFP.

¹⁵² Sadler, *Edwin Wilkins Field, a Memorial Sketch*, 150.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁵⁴ Frederick Ebenezer Baines, *Records of the Manor, Parish, and Borough of Hampstead, in the County of London, to December 31st, 1889* (London: Richard Clay & Sons, 1890), 436.

¹⁵⁵ Sadler, *Edwin Wilkins Field, a Memorial Sketch*, 72.

from 1856 to 1901.¹⁵⁶ Walter was also a member the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, an important network of artists within the Hampstead community to benefit from his father's warm hospitality. Edwin Wilkins often entertained intellectuals, artists and writers at his home; such as the poet and writer, William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), Egyptologist Samuel Sharpe (1799-1881) and artist Richard Doyle (1824-1876).¹⁵⁷ When Margaret's father came to stay at Gordon Square shortly after the couple returned from honeymoon, they all attended a large dinner party at Edwin Wilkins' home. It was a valuable introduction into an important and influential set which included Sir John Bolt, Lord Chief Justice of Appeal, and Walter Goodall (1830-1889), one of the members of The Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour. After dinner some of the party went to see the 'pictures' collection of solicitor William Strickland Cookson, father of Mary Jane Field (wife of Edwin Wilkins' son Walter) at The Pryors, Cookson's Hampstead home.¹⁵⁸

While Hampstead had an established artistic community by the 1870s, the neighbourhood of the Beales' home in Bloomsbury was becoming populated with Arts and Crafts protagonists aspiring to further their careers. Morris, Marshall and Faulkner were now based at nearby 26 Queen Square, having been established since 1861 by partners William Morris, Peter Paul Marshall, Charles Faulkner, Philip Webb, Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. They were an ambitious group of interlectuals and artists who sought to set new standards in the decorative arts.¹⁵⁹ Their company was underpinned by core principles which promoted professionals collaborating on decorative art commissions, so that designers, architects and artists would work together as required.¹⁶⁰ They promoted themselves as 'Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Furniture, Carving and the Metals' a title which immediately elevated the traditional craftsman to the same status as the fine artist. In their company prospectus, they identified themselves as 'artists of reputation', who

¹⁵⁶ Carlotta Barrow, '2 – Walter Field: Swanage Seen', accessed 8 July 2013, www.swanageseen.co.uk/current-panels/panel-2-2/.

¹⁵⁷ William Cullen Bryant and Thomas G Voss, *The Letters of William Cullen Bryant 4* (New York: Fordham U.P., 1984), 72.

¹⁵⁸ Margaret Beale, 'Dear Mother [letter Sent from 41 Gordon Square]', 30 May 1870, 3, CIMG0267, BFP.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Harvey and Jon Press, *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian England* (Manchester University Press, 1991), 41.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

were responding to an increase in the popularity of Decorative Art created by the endeavours of the English architects.¹⁶¹ The firm had rapidly expanded, benefitting from prestigious clients such as the South Kensington Museum who commissioned them in 1867 to work on the Western Refreshment Room, subsequently known as the Green Dining Room. If the Beales had visited the museum in the early 1870s, it is quite possible they would have taken refreshments in the newly decorated room; it may even have played a part in their later choosing the colour green for the walls for Standen's Dining Room, a subject explored in more detail in Part Four.¹⁶²

Nearby, at No. 2 Gower Street, in 1874 Agnes and Rhoda Garrett set up R. & A. Garrett House Decorators. They were the first women in England to train as architects before branching out to work on their own as professional house decorators.¹⁶³ As two independent women working in a trade usually reserved for men, their arrival would have attracted attention. Commentator Moncure Conway published an article in *Harper's Magazine* entitled 'Women as Decorative Artists' which explained that the Garretts had been inspired by the decorative work of firms like Morris & Co. because it 'offered opportunities for employment suitable to women'.¹⁶⁴ Thus, the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement, championed by William Morris and his associates offered an acceptable way for women to develop a professional career.¹⁶⁵ The Garretts' new premises were decorated to showcase their design skills and decorative taste, examples of which were illustrated in *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork and Furniture*, their advice book published in 1876.¹⁶⁶ It is possible that the Beales were acquainted with the Garretts before moving to

¹⁶¹ John William Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, vol. I, new ed., (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901), 150.

¹⁶² The paint colour of the Dining Room walls at Standen was probably originally 'Crome Oxide Green', the colour favoured by William Morris and Philip Webb. Helen Beale informed Brandon-Jones that the present colour was an improvement chosen by her sister Maggie, see John Brandon-Jones, 'Letter Regarding the Papers of George Jack', October 1993, STA03 London, NTS.

¹⁶³ Emma Ferry, "'Decorators May Be Compared to Doctors'", *Journal of Design History* 16, no. 10 (2003): 17.

¹⁶⁴ Moncure Daniel Conway, 'Women as Decorative Artists', *Harper's Magazine*, 31 October 1874, 2.

¹⁶⁵ Lynne Walker, 'The Arts and Crafts Alternative', in *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women, and Design*, by Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham (Women's Press, 1989), 70.

¹⁶⁶ Elizabeth Crawford, *Enterprising Women: The Garretts and Their Circle* (London: Francis Boutle, 2009), 177.

Holland Park since they would have been seeking advice from designers and professionals in their local vicinity before moving. They might also have visited Morris & Co. at 26 Queens Square; not only were their products considered as eminently fashionable amongst the affluent middle-classes, but the new house that the couple were seeking to furnish and decorate was in Holland Park, a neighbourhood attracting wealthy professionals, not least through its reputation as the centre of artistic taste.

The issue of taste is well-documented by scholars of domestic space and it is widely recognised that conventions of 'good taste' were crucial to the construction and consolidation of class identity.¹⁶⁷ Essentially valued as a social accomplishment, 'taste' exercised a huge influence over Victorian decision-making and polite behaviour. Those aspiring to cultivate good or superior 'taste' were required to comply with a set of standards that were implicitly understood and widely recognised by their social peers. During this period conventions of 'taste' were outlined by a myriad of popular advice manuals and magazines which were available to householders seeking guidance. Women's magazines such as *Myra's Journal* for example, linked the exhibiting of good taste in home furnishings to playing a part in national advancement:

It must not be thought that the taste displayed in our surroundings is a small matter, as from the earliest stages, the progress of nations has been shown in the dwellings of its people, [...]¹⁶⁸

Such publications especially appealed to women and underlined how taste, reflected in Victorian domestic interiors, was not only bound up with national pride but also with issues of decency and edification. *A Plea For Art In The House* for instance, the first of a set of advice manual's from the *Art at Home* series, edited by the Reverend William Loftie in 1876, emphasised the significance of art and taste in education and morals. Loftie asserted that taste was not just 'a moral duty' but a 'religious duty' and envisaged 'an ideal of heaven as a home' in which home-spun artistic creativity, such as painting or

¹⁶⁷ Trevor Keeble, "Everything Whispers of Wealth and Luxury": Observation, Emulation and Display in the Well-to-Do-Late-Victorian Home', in *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950*, ed. by Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth, (Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 69–84 (71).

¹⁶⁸ Red Spider, 'Artistic Homes', *Myra's Journal* (London), 1888, 364.

embroidery, played a central role.¹⁶⁹ Such advice appealed to educated women like Margaret Beale and her daughters who were not only accomplished embroiderers but were also guided by Unitarian ideals which associated high moral values with education and artistic endeavour. It is possible that Margaret Beale referred to a copy of the Garrett cousins' *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork and Furniture* for advice when they moved to Holland Park in 1875 and later when they were choosing the decorative scheme for Standen. It was the second book in Macmillan's *Art at Home* series, a collection embedded with liberal ideas in which authors stressed individuality, education, science and women's rights.¹⁷⁰ These were a set of progressive interests and values which were compatible with the Beales' Unitarian beliefs. For the Garretts, the personal touch in home decoration was crucial. 'No house is satisfactory', the Garretts advised, 'unless it bears also the impress of home, and this impress must come from within'.¹⁷¹ The display of individuality in home decorations and furnishings was the material manifestation of 'good taste', a social accomplishment signalling membership of the cultured classes. The Beales, and those of their wider social circle, belonged to such ranks, a status succinctly summarised by the Garretts as 'the cultivated middle-class, able to enjoy leisure, refinement and moderation'.¹⁷²

When the Beales moved to 32 Holland Park in 1875, this part of the old Holland Estate was already home to an extensive network of artists and their patrons, as illustrated on an annotated map of Holland Park Estate (Fig. 30). Across the road lived influential art patron and Consul General for Greece, Alexander Ionides, who had purchased No. 1 in 1864. A short distance away was Little Holland House, the Dower House of Holland House which had been home to Henry and Sara Prinsep and George Frederic Watts since the 1850s. They were renowned as entertainers of notable artists and patrons, especially those who associated with the Pre-Raphaelite circle. A studio house at 1 Holland

¹⁶⁹ William John Loftie, *A Plea for Art in the House, with Special Reference to the Economy of Collecting Works of Art, and the Importance of Taste in Education and Morals* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1876), 89.

¹⁷⁰ Judy A. Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home 1870-1914* (Yale University Press, 2008), 145.

¹⁷¹ Rhoda Garrett and Agnes Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture* (Macmillan, 1876), 11.

¹⁷² Garrett and Garrett, 9.

Park Road had been built by Webb for the Prinseps' son Valentine in 1864. Next door, at No. 2, a studio designed by George Aitchison had been constructed at the same time for the painter Frederic Leighton, who later became President of the Royal Academy. Further along at No.7, a building had been converted in the early 1870s to a studio for Irish artist Anthony C. Stannus.¹⁷³ When Little Holland House was demolished in 1875 to make way for Melbury Road, George Frederic Watts had 'New Little Holland House' built at No. 6 Melbury Road.¹⁷⁴ Two doors away, at No. 8, a studio house designed by Richard Norman Shaw was being built for Royal Academician Marcus Stone.¹⁷⁵

With close access to artistic and creative communities, through their interest in art, the Beales were ideally placed to negotiate and strengthen their social and cultural standing. The idea that a place of residence is crucial to an individual's identity is a theme explored by scholars, such as James S. Duncan, who have drawn upon the work of anthropologist Amos Rapoport¹⁷⁶ to argue that emerging societies or groups considered the house to be a status symbol, a vital requirement of being accepted into the social world with which they sought to be identified.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, the Beales' house at Holland Park can be understood as a symbol of their social standing, perceived as a necessary attribute amongst the ranks of 'educated, middle-class professionals'.¹⁷⁸ Members of this social group were particularly influenced by the artists' studio-houses of the late-nineteenth century, an 'architectural genre which could shape the position in society of its occupants and influence the development of domestic building for an emerging class'.¹⁷⁹ Thus, by entrenching themselves in the social circles connected with the artistic and professional classes of Kensington, the Beales reinforced their middle-class status. Moreover, their

¹⁷³ A studio house designed by architect Frederick P. Cockerell to which a picture gallery designed by George Aitchison was later added. Giles Walkley, *Artists' Houses in London 1764-1914* (Aldershot, Hants: Scolar Press, 1994), 269.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 270.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1969).

¹⁷⁷ James S. Duncan, *Housing and Identity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Taylor & Francis, 1981), 37.

¹⁷⁸ Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design & Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London; New York: V&A Publishing, 2010), 9.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

social and family connections in London were a source of inspiration for the building of Standen, the house that was to become their version of an 'artistic' home in the country.

Described as a detached villa, No. 32 Holland Park was a desirable family residence that was part of a development built between 1859 and 1872 by brothers William and Francis Radford.¹⁸⁰ From the outset, these properties were intended to be 'houses of much greater distinction' than the neighbouring dwellings situated in the Addison Road and Lorne Gardens estates. Four rows of identical Villas at Holland Park were reputedly designed by Francis Radford. They consisted of three or four storeys over a basement, illustrated by a modern photograph of the house (Fig. 31).¹⁸¹ A contemporary glimpse of the house design can be seen in the background of a family photograph taken of the eldest child Amy sat on her horse (Fig. 32). It was probably taken outside her home at No.32 as she waited to accompany her father on his morning journey across Holland Park to the office.¹⁸² The houses were double-fronted, with embellished cornices and architectural ornament complete with Roman Doric porches and balconies at first floor level.¹⁸³ The Beales also owned No.5 Holland Park Mews at the rear of the house; this was entered through an elaborate archway leading down to an access road (Fig. 33). Comprising of a coach house and stables, the mews house was designed with an external staircase to the living accommodation and some ornamental details similar to that used for the villas.¹⁸⁴ An idea of the internal layout of the main house with three floors, a basement and an attic can be gleaned from plans submitted to the Borough Council in 1915, when the new owner of the house was seeking to make improvements.¹⁸⁵ These show that there were four main rooms in the basement, one of which was the kitchen with smaller rooms for the larder, wine

¹⁸⁰ F H W Sheppard and C R Ashbee, eds., *The Survey of London*, vol. 37, North Kensington (London County Council, 1973), 121.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37:119.

¹⁸² Phyllis Margaret Wager, *PMW Reminiscences* (Oxford: Printed by Parchment Oxford Limited, 2004), 6.

¹⁸³ Sheppard and Ashbee, *The Survey of London*, 37:266.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 37:123.

¹⁸⁵ The plans that were submitted on behalf of the new owner in 1915 detailing improvements to the drainage system which probably utilised those drawn up when the house was originally built. 'Royal Borough of Kensington, Drainage Plans, 32 Holland Park', 12 January 1915, Ref: 23019, KCLS.

cellar, scullery, heating chamber, boot and wood store (Fig. 34).¹⁸⁶ Above ground level, there was a Drawing Room, Dining Room, School Room and Smoke Room on the ground floor and a total of ten bedrooms with three dressing rooms across the first, second and attic floors.¹⁸⁷

Thus, the designation of interior space at 32 Holland Park conformed to a hierarchical structure which allowed for the implementation of a socially-ordered household. This was partly imposed by the architectural design and partly determined by social conventions and practicality. However, in order to gain an insight into the Beales' cultural and social standing, a list of the rooms in itself does not indicate how the internal space was used. Bryden and Floyd suggest that an analysis of domestic space should not be restricted to an attached label or designation but should be determined by how the space is used in practice.¹⁸⁸ They draw upon the work of anthropologist Henrietta Moore who argues that 'the meaning of a spatial text is to be found in the study of the way in which its users develop rules for operating within it'.¹⁸⁹ In the Beales' case, 'user rules' are implied in the handwritten notes relating to servants' duties by room and rank, diligently kept by Margaret Beale. It was a method of household management that she continued later at Standen. The household was organised into a daily routine which included family members and servants alike.

At the start of the day at 7.30am, for example, servants would wake the household; Gertrude the Housemaid called the first floor and Ada the Parlour-maid called the second floor for breakfast at 8.30.¹⁹⁰ The employment of servants was a necessary attribute of the Victorian middle-classes and perceived as an indicator of status.¹⁹¹ The Beales maintained a number of servants whose rank was determined both by the room's importance and by whom they served within the household hierarchy. The Butler for example, mainly located at the front of the house, took care of the front door bell, the cabs

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Mrs J S Beale, 'Handwritten Note Listing "H.Park" Reception Rooms and Cleaning Instructions', un-dated, Box 8, Item 21, Standen Archive.

¹⁸⁸ Henrietta L. Moore, *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya* (CUP Archive, 1986), 8.

¹⁸⁹ Bryden and Floyd, 'Introduction', 3.

¹⁹⁰ Mrs J S Beale, 'Gertrude and Ada, List of Duties', un-dated, Box 8, Item 14, NTS.

¹⁹¹ Anthony S. Wohl, *The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses* (Taylor & Francis, 1978), 44.

and letters and calling the men of the house.¹⁹² The Housemaids, on the other hand, had a cleaning rota for specific rooms; Harriet started cleaning in the 'Drawing Room, except [for the] grate', which was dealt with by the Under Housemaid at 7 am.¹⁹³ Other servants employed included a Footman, Cook, Kitchen maid, Nurse, Under-nurse, Parlour maid and Under-Parlour maid.¹⁹⁴ Thus Margaret Beale's management of the Holland Park household was fairly regimented and conformed to the traditional Victorian conventions expected of their social status. However, when it came to choosing furnishing and decorations for their new home, it seems that the Beales moved away from tradition.

Although there is no single text which recollects how the Beale family decorated and furnished the interior space at Holland Park, some of the items of furniture and other objects which remain in Standen's collection offer valuable clues, not least the Garrett cousins advice book of 1876, *Suggestions for House Decorating*, which is currently displayed in Standen's Morning Room.¹⁹⁵ This copy is an 1876 edition and is marked with the original sale price of '2/6' on the back cover in what appears to be Margaret Beale's handwriting.¹⁹⁶ It is possible that she purchased a copy of the book not long after moving into their new house. It was specifically aimed at the 'cultivated middle-classes', those who sought to achieve fashionable interior decoration on a modest budget. Besides listing some rules for using professional decorators, it justified why the Garretts admired the 'old stuff', referring to their taste in furniture.¹⁹⁷ Echoing one of the main tenets of the Arts & Crafts Movement, they believed that if quality furniture was properly constructed by skilled craftsmen they saw no reason why it could not be 'handed down to our descendants as specimens of Victorian woodwork just as we now find Chippendale work and point to it with pride'.¹⁹⁸ These words

¹⁹² Mrs J S Beale, 'Instructions to Servants - Handwritten Notes, Holland Park', un-dated, Box 8.20, NTS.

¹⁹³ Mrs J S Beale, 'Housemaid Duties', Box 8, Item 9, NTS.

¹⁹⁴ Beale, 'Instructions to Servants - Handwritten Notes, Holland Park'.

¹⁹⁵ Garrett and Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture*.

¹⁹⁶ The original sale price of the Macmillan 'Art at Home' series, for price details see William Swan Sonnenschein, *The Best Books: A Reader's Guide to the Choice of the Best Available Books* (Swan Sonnenschein & Company, 1891), 683.

¹⁹⁷ Garrett and Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture*, 7.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

of advice certainly resonated with the Beales, who commissioned the Garretts to make a hall cupboard for their new home, occupying a space where it would have impressed visitors as soon as they entered the house (Fig. 35).¹⁹⁹ Resembling a sixteenth-century court cupboard, the design encompassed two centrally placed lozenge-shaped plaques prominently displaying the date '1875' and the intertwined initials of both James and Margaret Beale, a personal inscription honouring the Beales' marital union and their new family home (Fig. 36). The same lozenge shape is repeated later at Standen, outlined in red brick and set into the creamy stone wall of the courtyard archway where it joins the old farmhouse. Elizabeth Crawford describes this piece of furniture as 'Queen Anne eclecticism', identifying influences on Garrett design as Inigo Jones and Wren in the top half of the cupboard and Sheraton-style feet below.²⁰⁰ The cupboard functioned as a memorial object or future heirloom that could be 'handed down' to successive generations and remains in private family ownership today.

As keen advocates of the so-called 'Queen Anne' style, the Garrett cousins' preferences may have encouraged the Beales to purchase items of antique furniture such as 'a side table (Queen Anne): bought in 1875, which, according to Margaret Beale 'was very old then'.²⁰¹ It was an item included in her 'February 1914' list of household furnishings which were presumably destined for Standen after the sale of the Holland Park house in November of that year. Another item identified as a 'square oak table made by Miss Garrett for 32 Holland Park', affirms that the Garretts' taste in furniture clearly resonated with the Beales'.²⁰² They commissioned quite a few Garrett pieces for their Holland Park home, many of which were later sent to Standen, distinguished by their solid square tapering legs. A settee (Fig. 37) and a pair of footstools (Fig. 38) now on display in Standen's Drawing Room, upholstered in faded rose-pink embossed velvet, signified the colour scheme probably chosen for the Holland Park Drawing Room. It corresponds with the type of material used for the curtains from Holland Park which now hang in the Hall at Standen. A Garrett

¹⁹⁹ 'Court Cupboard: Notes on Reverse of Photograph', Box 23, NTS.

²⁰⁰ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 180.

²⁰¹ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 65.

²⁰² Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 65.

daybed (Fig. 39), now in the Larkspur Bedroom and a footstool (Fig. 40) in the Morning Room can be identified in *Drawing Room chimney piece*, an illustration facing page 61 in the Garretts' advice book (Fig. 41). Besides their recognisable tapering legs, the pair of mahogany arm chairs now in the Morning Room feature carved decorative, circular reliefs which similarly appear on the settee, footstools and daybed (Fig. 42). A Garrett corner cabinet, also in the Morning Room (Fig. 43) is almost identical the one showcased in the *View of Drawing-Room*, another illustration in the Garretts' advice book (Fig. 44). Besides supplying furniture, it is quite likely that the Garretts would also have been involved in the Beales' decorative scheme for Holland Park.²⁰³ This seems plausible as the cousins favoured 'Trellis' wallpaper by William Morris, featured in their advice book it is depicted in an illustration of a Dining Room thought to be modelled on their Gower Street home (Fig. 45). This wallpaper design was certainly approved by the Beales, as it was chosen later by them to decorate Standen's Morning Room Corridor (Fig. 46).

As interior decorators, the Garrett cousins personally advised clients and guided readers of their advice manual on aesthetic taste. For home décor, they suggested that the 'properties of ornamental art' advocated by Oriental nations such as Persia and Japan should be followed.²⁰⁴ The Beales embraced this fashionable trend for the Oriental by purchasing a Persian carpet and three rugs, which according to Margaret Beale were 'used all the time there' [...] 'when we went to 32 Holland Park in 1875'.²⁰⁵ Ownership of such objects illustrates that the Beales were part of a social class who could afford to express their status through material objects. Contributing to the construction of middle-class identity, these objects 'carried the desired connotations of luxury and exoticism' and were purchased by 'a growing middle-class [which] sought to find and exert its place in society'.²⁰⁶ For many middle-class Victorians their

²⁰³ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 192.

²⁰⁴ Garrett and Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture*, 44.

²⁰⁵ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book'.

²⁰⁶ Elizabeth Kramer, 'From Specimen to Scrap: Japanese Textiles in the British Victorian Interior, 1875-1900', in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, ed. John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 129-147 (129).

advancement of social status was related to 'material abundance', detected in the consumption and display of decorative objects for the home.²⁰⁷

The Beales' relationship with the Garretts did not end when Rhoda died in 1882; it extended beyond house furnishing and décor matters to a property venture providing accommodation for 'educated ladies earning their own living'.²⁰⁸ In February 1888, James Beale joined Agnes Garrett, John Westlake, Christina Herringham and the Reverend Giles Pilcher as a Director of The Ladies' Residential Chambers Ltd.²⁰⁹ Board meetings were initially held at James Beale's office in Great George Street for their first development at Chenies Chambers in Chenies Street. When the directors allocated rooms they gave 'preference to women earning their own livelihood',²¹⁰ they were described by one commentator 'as suites of unfurnished rooms for those who can afford to pay for them and single rooms fitted as bed and sitting rooms combined'.²¹¹ The revolutionary venture, designed to provide assistance to women who wished to remain single and pursue professional working careers,²¹² was later supported by other Beale family relations. James Beale's sister-in-law Mary Phipson Beale (1847-1927) (otherwise known as cookery writer, Marie de Joncourt) became a Director when John Westlake resigned in 1895. She was succeeded in 1911 by the wife of James Beale's nephew, Mrs C.H. Sargent (1871-1961) née Amelia Julia Gambardella, the artist.²¹³ Interestingly, Margaret Beale is also recorded as becoming one of the company's shareholders in March 1889,²¹⁴ a position which must have been altruistically motivated since the shares were not expected to yield a huge profit.²¹⁵ Even the presence of known active suffragists such as Millicent Fawcett and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson listed among the names of fellow shareholders did not dissuade Margaret Beale from being involved. The Beales' support of Ladies' Residential

²⁰⁷ Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*, 277.

²⁰⁸ 'The Ladies' Residential Chambers', *Women's Penny Paper* (London), 25 May 1889, 6.

²⁰⁹ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 207.

²¹⁰ Ladies' Residential Chambers Ltd., 'Minute Books', 1936 1888, 2, 0975, WCA.

²¹¹ Coleman, Miss H. Davidson, *What Our Daughters Can Do for Themselves: A Handbook of Women's Employments* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1894), 120.

²¹² Deborah Colville, 'UCL Bloomsbury Project:Ladies' Dwellings Company', 19 April 2011, accessed 21 August 2015.

www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/institutions/ladies_dwellings.htm. 2015.

²¹³ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 208.

²¹⁴ Ladies' Residential Chambers Ltd., 'Minute Books' Meeting held on 18 March 1889.

²¹⁵ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 208.

Chambers, facilitated through their artistic and business connections, clearly demonstrates their support of issues connected with social reform and progressive ideas, especially those directly related to improving women's welfare.

Thus, the Beales' social and business connections in London were fostered through common interests in art and culture. There would have been no shortage of opportunity for the Beales to view paintings and cultivate the degree of superior 'taste' required to patronise such artistic circles based on the number of artists' studios located within a short walk of Holland Park. Artist studios were regularly visited by a cultured, art-loving public; it was a middle-class pastime in which the Beale family probably participated. 'Studio Sunday' visits were a popular family excursion, as London visitor, Count Paul Radziwill observed in 1885,

Fashionable visits take place on Sunday; and there is even a special "Studio Sunday" a month before the opening of the academy, when a pilgrimage is made to the studios of favourite artists.²¹⁶

George Frederic Watts, for instance opened his Melbury Road studio gallery 'free of charge' every Sunday for visitors.²¹⁷ Moreover, if the Beales had visited Sir Frederic Leighton's Holland Park Road studio in the spring of 1878, they would have seen the latest works of art, such as *Winding the skein*, an oil painting exhibited at the Royal Academy that year.²¹⁸ Visitors like the Beales would also have noticed the studio's distinctive decorative scheme, described in a *Magazine of Art* article, published in 1878, as a 'a picture in itself' (Fig. 47).²¹⁹ The décor of Leighton's studio reflected his artistic and creative persona, an effect he achieved by combining carefully selected antiques with items which had personal and historical significance.²²⁰ As an influential artist seeking to create a model of refined taste, antiques played a central role in the way that

²¹⁶ Count Paul Vasili, *The World of London* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1885), 222.

²¹⁷ Caroline Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society* (Yale University Press, 1999), 2.

²¹⁸ 'Half-Hour in the Studios', *Magazine of Art*, 1878, 24.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ A. Anderson, 'The "New Old School": Furnishing with Antiques in the Modern Interior--Frederic, Lord Leighton's Studio-House and Its Collections', *Journal of Design History*, 24 (2010), 315–338, 317.

Leighton's studio was decorated.²²¹ Followers of fashionable taste and admirers from the Holland Park set and beyond were undoubtedly inspired to emulate his decorative style in their own homes.

In the late 1870s, paintings with exotic and oriental subject matter were fashionable. Next door to Leighton, Valentine Prinsep was working in his studio on a large picture of the Durbar for the Queen, having just come back from his travels to the East.²²² A visit to an artist's studio not only provided a chance to closely view their latest work but also an opportunity to gaze into the artist's life. How the artist presented himself and his studio to the public was often achieved through a careful process of self-fashioning, assisted by contemporary periodicals and magazines, such as *Art Journal*.²²³ In 1883, for instance M. Phipps-Jackson wrote about Bavarian-born artist Carl Haag, a painter of Oriental subjects who had reflected on time spent living in Egypt by building himself a studio in Hampstead 'to realise the idea of the interior of a room of an Eastern Gentleman's House' (Fig. 48).²²⁴ In emphasising his experience of a simple, pre-industrial life, a characterisation often identified with those of Middle-Eastern culture, Haag's studio identified him as an artist disconnected from the trappings of consumerism. It was a portrayal underwritten by the concept of a 'pure artist', a Victorian construction championed by John Ruskin, particularly in his lectures first published in 1857 as *The Political Economy of Art*.²²⁵ His beliefs, connected with a mission to improve the national character, were bound up with the idea of prelapsarian artists, 'carriers of innocence whose "pure" works served collectors escape fantasies as well as national ideals'.²²⁶ Such ideals resonated with the Beales and others who believed that an appreciation of art improved and educated people's lives. They probably visited Haag's studio in the late 1870s after being introduced through Margaret Beale's cousin, Walter Field, a fellow member of The Royal Society of Painters

²²¹ Anderson, 'The "New Old School"'.
²²² 'Half-Hour in the Studios', 24.

²²³ Julie F. Codell, 'Artists' Biographies and the Anxieties of National Culture', *Victorian Review*

27, no. 1 (2001): 4.

²²⁴ M Phipps-Jackson, 'Cairo in London: Carl Haag's Studio', *Art Journal*, March 1883, 74.

²²⁵ John Ruskin, *The Political Economy of Art* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1867).

²²⁶ Julie F. Codell, 'From Culture to Cultural Capital: Victorian Artists, John Ruskin, and the Political Economy of Art', in *The Political Economy of Art: Making the Nation of Culture* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), 34.

in Watercolour.²²⁷ Although he did not accept, Haag was certainly invited to attend the Beales' 'Dance' at Holland Park in 1888. Also a later letter from Haag records that they visited him together with the Field's at his studio in 1894 to purchase two paintings, specifically during the period they were acquiring items to furnish Standen.²²⁸

The Beales' wish to identify themselves as credible art patrons was not new; they had lent two paintings to the Grosvenor Gallery for its Winter Exhibition of 1878-79.²²⁹ One was by their artist cousin Walter Field, entitled *Stone Quarry, near St. Alban's Head*, and the other by artist G. Fripp entitled *Haymaking*.²³⁰ They would have been considered as part of a group of eminent patrons connected with the Grosvenor Gallery who were then at the forefront of the London art scene. The gallery had only opened a year earlier, in July of 1877, having been built and financed by Sir Coutts Lindsay in answer to a rising public dissatisfaction with the Royal Academy.²³¹ One of the main criticisms levied at the historic institution was directly related to its ability to select the best art. According to the *Art Journal* of 1877, 'popular art had occupied the attention and space of the Royal Academy for too long'.²³² It was a problem that would be rectified by the new Grosvenor Gallery which only intended to 'receive the best examples of English serious Art'.²³³ Determined to find an answer to drawbacks of the Royal Academy, the Gallery planned to allow more space around each individual art work when exhibiting, confirming that 'the pictures were to be arranged with the same care and attention to space as if the gallery containing them were the drawing-room (sic) of a private house'.²³⁴ Thus the Grosvenor Gallery appealed directly to a wealthy middle-class audience, people

²²⁷ Walter Field (1837-1901) was son of Edwin Wilkins Field. Baines, *Records of the Manor, Parish, and Borough of Hampstead, in the County of London, to December 31st, 1889*, 406.

²²⁸ Carl Haag, 'Letter from Carl Haag', 12 April 1894, Standen MS/154, WSRO.

²²⁹ Grosvenor Gallery, *Winter Exhibition of Drawings by the Old Masters, and Water-colour Drawings by Artists of the British School, 1878-79* (Chiswick Press, 1878), 162 & 139.

²³⁰ *Haymaking* by G Fripp had been on display in the London gallery of Arthur Tooth & Sons of Haymarket in 1867 and could well have been seen there by the Beales' before they moved to London see 'Mr. Tooth's Picture Gallery', *Art Journal*, vol. 29 (London: Virtue and Company, 1867), 268.

²³¹ Charles E. Pascoe, 'Art in London. The New Grosvenor Gallery', *Art Journal (1875-1887)* New Series, Vol. 3 (1877): 94.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

like the Beales, who were actively collecting paintings and prints to exhibit and enjoy on the walls of their own home.

Thus the Beales can be perceived as private collectors who emulated connoisseurial practise by attending auctions, visiting artists' studios and prestigious art galleries. Since the late 1870s they had been regular patrons of Christie, Manson and Woods in King Street, a practice which continued when they moved to their new home in Kensington. The Beales marked their auction catalogue copies with prices realised against the Lots that interested them. Their copy of a catalogue for an auction held on Saturday March 30 1878 Lot 127 is marked with a price of 16 guineas. This relates to a painting by cousin, Walter Field entitled *Hampstead Heath* (Fig. 49).²³⁵ Christie's sale of 'Etchings and Engravings' on April 5 1878, the front page of the Beales' catalogue indicates they purchased 'Lots 169, 177, 183 and 255'.²³⁶ All four lots were prints of religious works, described as being 'after Raphael', the Italian Renaissance artist. Lot 169, for example, a work by engraver Giuseppe Longhi (1766-1831) described as *The Holy Family, after Raphael after The Holy Family of Francis I, (known as The Great Holy Family) by Raphael, 1518*.²³⁷ This engraving was probably taken to Standen when the Holland Park home was sold in 1914 and remains on display at Standen today. Five more religious prints were purchased at Christie's auction in June 1879; these were works after Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Correggio. For the Beales the ownership of a fine engraving, which in itself was a product of intensive labour and craftsmanship, was a way of demonstrating a refined taste in art. Although it was an affordable substitute for a real masterpiece, it also represented a work of art in its own right.²³⁸ The continued popularity of the traditional reproductive print was connected to its ability to portray the spirit of the original work rather than its literal appearance.²³⁹ 'Fine art' prints imitating the great Renaissance masters were purchased as part of the Beales' overall aesthetic scheme for Holland Park, which included items of antique and bespoke furniture, oriental

²³⁵ Christie Manson & Woods, 'Auction Catalogue, Saturday 30th March', 1878, MS/157, WSRO.

²³⁶ Christie Manson & Woods, 'Auction Catalogue, Friday April 5th', 1878, MS/158, WSRO.

²³⁷ Now at the Museo Nacional Del Prado, Spain.

²³⁸ Anthony Hamber, 'The Use of Photography by Nineteenth Century Art Historians', *Visual Resources* 7, no. 2-3 (1990): 145.

²³⁹ Ibid.

rugs mixed with personal effects to achieve the blending of different historical styles and periods. Common to members of the Holland Park set, interiors such as these were seeking to demonstrate an artistic and cultivated taste.

In an area such as Holland Park, artistic and political connections vital to maintaining an elevated social position were inextricably linked to notions of good taste. Possessors of this required social accomplishment invariably demonstrated it through the collection and display of art. Merchant banker, Alexander Ionides and his family for instance, living at No.1, had patronised artists such as and James A. M. Whistler and Edward Burne-Jones extensively since moving to the area in the mid-1860s.²⁴⁰ Other members of the Greek Ionides' clan were his daughter Aglaia, and her husband Theodore John Coronio, also recognised art patrons who had moved into No. 1A in 1869. They knew the Beales' well enough for Aglaia to visit Margaret Beale c.1900 at Standen while James Beale went for dinner in London with her husband.²⁴¹ Living in close proximity, it is only natural that the Beales socialised with their Greek neighbours.²⁴² The Ionides clan were among a number of guests invited to a Dance held at 32 Holland Park on Friday May 10 1889. The acceptance list compiled by Margaret Beale not only included members of the Ionides family such as Constantine Alexander with his sons Luke and Constantine Ionides but also other notable names from the art world.²⁴³ These included members of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, Margaret's cousin Walter Field, with 'A. Fripp' [Alfred Downing Fripp], brother of artist G. A. Fripp and Charles Robertson. Important politicians also attended the Beales' dance, such as a party of three Chamberlains, which was probably Joseph Chamberlain with his two daughters Ida and Hilda. The Beales spared no expense, hiring G. Tansley & Co. the Ball and Concert Furnishers, from 16 Wigmore Street to get the house ready. They polished floors and brought in extra furniture and crockery, such as '34 chairs' and '120 small plates'.²⁴⁴ Entertaining 162 guests with supper and dancing, it was certainly a grand affair, requiring '5 musicians (no piano)' and '4 men waiters'. The musicians arrived at 8.30 to play 'a selection of

²⁴⁰ Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle*, 109.

²⁴¹ Aglaia Coronio, 'Letter to Mrs Beale, Thursday', c 1900, Standen MS/251, WSRO.

²⁴² They were one of the guests who attended a 'Dance' given by the Beales' in May 1889.

²⁴³ Margaret Beale, 'Acceptances for Friday May 10th', 1889, Holland Park, BFP.

²⁴⁴ G Tansley & Co, 'Invoice K63', 1889, Holland Park, BFP.

popular vales' on the violin, harp, bass and cornet.²⁴⁵ The supper was sumptuous, consisting of a list of dishes intended to impress: for example, '7 Lobsters', a '20 lb. Salmon', '4 dishes of Lamb Cutlets' and '12 doz. Plovers Eggs'.²⁴⁶

The Beales maintained their social network by regularly giving dinner parties for selected guests. According to Margaret Beale's detailed account books of monthly expenditure kept from 1875, it was quite usual for them to hold a dinner party once a month, sometimes catering for as many as fourteen guests.²⁴⁷ When friends and business acquaintances came to dinner, they would have been able to judge the respectability and social position of their hosts from the house interior and the way that the dinner party was arranged.²⁴⁸ They would have probably invited friends such as eminent dentist Sir John Tomes (1815-1895) with his wife Jane. Sir John was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons who had retired to live in Upwood Gorse in Caterham, a house designed by Philip Webb in 1869.²⁴⁹ Tomes' son, dentist Charles Sissmore Tomes (1846-1928), and his wife Lizzie were also close friends and would have dined regularly with the Beales. Accordingly, Margaret Beale's menus were impressive. A notebook she kept between 1876 and 1878 with her menu plans reveals that on 17 May 1876 she arranged dinner for twelve starting with 'Spring Soup', followed by 'Grilled Slices of Salmon Tartare', then 'Entrees of Lamb Cutlets a la Princesse, Sweetbreads Toulouse and Cocks combs' with 'Haunch of Mutton and Lobster Mayonnaise'. Dessert was 'Coconut Pudding, Pineapple Cream and Cheese Ramekins'.

On some occasions, the dinner guests would have been the Beales' close relations, such as James Beale's brothers, William Phipson Beale and Edwin A. Clifford Beale both of whom lived locally in Kensington. Appointed Queen's Council in 1888, William Phipson Beale was an eminent solicitor and politician. In the 1880s, he and his wife Mary moved to 19, Upper Phillimore Gardens, and

²⁴⁵ G C Pritchard, 'Letter from G C Pritchard, 32 London Street, Fitzroy Square. W. to Mrs Beale Regarding Muscians for Dance May 1889.', April 1889, Holland Park. BFP.

²⁴⁶ Margaret Beale, 'Dance May 10th 1889', 1889, 4, Holland Park, BFP.

²⁴⁷ Margaret Beale, 'Account Book 1875', 1875, Holland Park, BFP.

²⁴⁸ Rachel Rich, 'Designing the Dinner Party: Advice on Dining and Decor in London and Paris 1860-1914', *Journal of Design History* 16, no. 1 (2003): 49.

²⁴⁹ Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 213.

by 1901 were sufficiently wealthy to afford a country estate in Scotland called Drumlanford at Barrhill in Ayrshire (Fig. 50). Edwin Clifford Beale married Margaret Beale's sister Mary Elizabeth Field in 1886 and they lived in Addison Road. He had trained as a physician and from 1887 was Assistant Consultant at the City of London Hospital for Diseases of the Chest. Like his brothers, he retired to the country, moving to 'Allan Down' in Rotherfield in the early twentieth-century. The Beale siblings maintained regular contact and often visited one another's houses for dinner parties and longer stays. When Standen was first built in 1894, James's brothers and their wives were amongst the first visitors to admire the new house.²⁵⁰

Although giving dinner parties in their London home reinforced their social status, the Beales also sustained their social circle away from the city. An equally important indicator of status was connected to where individuals spent their leisure time. The ranks of the rising middle-classes were increasingly participating in hunting, shooting and fishing, sports traditionally associated with aristocracy, as a way of 'expressing class parity with large landowners'.²⁵¹ Together with a party of friends and relations, the Beale family regularly went away for a month in August to Perthshire in Scotland for the game shooting season. James Beale leased 'Chesthill' in Aberfeldy for three years, from 1888 to 1890, as illustrated in a family photograph (Fig. 51). It was not just a matter of being there for the shooting and hunting events; socialising with the wider community in the manner of an established landowner was an important marker of social identity. A news article transcribed by hand from *The People's Journal* of September 1890, described a grand supper and ball organised by the Beales at Chesthill:

The shooting tenant at Chesthill, Mr J S Beale, London who has leased these extensive shootings for the past three years, and who is becoming more popular every season, gave a grand supper & ball on Friday evening. Invitations were sent to all the tenants on the estate and others. About forty couples assembled and were treated by Mr and Mrs Beale with their usual liberality. The dancing hall was decorated by the ladies with a profusion of flowers & foliage intersected by fairy lamps, stags antlers and ancient and modern furniture. The company woke up next

²⁵⁰ 'Visitor Book 1 1894-1910, Standen', 1910 1894, 2, Safe Archive, NTS.

²⁵¹ J. A. Mangan, *A Sport-Loving Society: Victorian and Edwardian Middle-Class England at Play* (Psychology Press, 2006), 44.

morning highly delighted with the evening's entertainment and cherishing feelings of gratitude toward Mr Beale and his worthy lady.²⁵²

During the holiday period in Scotland, the Beales regularly entertained the local Aberfeldy community; the following year, on September 11 1891, another grand event was organised, which according to Margaret Beale's shopping list provided 'plenty for about 80 people'.²⁵³ Assuming a social position akin to ancient lords of the manor, it is plausible that such sentiments and aspirations played a part in the Beales' decision to purchase a country estate of their own in Sussex. They were also undoubtedly influenced by their Holland Park neighbours.

Alexander Ionides had retired to Sussex in 1875, selling his house at No. 1 to his son, Alecco Ionides, who commissioned Webb to carry out a number of alterations to the property in 1879.²⁵⁴ Residents who wished to improve or enlarge their homes favoured architects like Webb with a proven portfolio; he had already built a studio house for Valentine Prinsep in Holland Park Road in the 1860s so he was well-known amongst the 'exclusive art set' in the area.²⁵⁵ Working at 1, Holland Park for a period lasting nearly ten years, Webb would have been a familiar figure to the Beales and other nearby residents. He first designed a staircase extension at the rear of the property, then some panelling, a sideboard and a fireplace for the dining room.²⁵⁶ He also influenced his client's choice of interior decorations; Morris & Co. supplied many of the textiles and furnishings at 1, Holland Park, such as *Flower Garden*, silk and wool damask (Fig. 52) for the Drawing Room walls in 1883 (Fig. 53). It was one of the selections that could have inspired Margaret Beale's decorative taste at Standen, as discussed in Part Six. Undoubtedly, Webb's reputation and regular presence during the works to 1, Holland Park at the time that the Beales were contemplating a holiday home in the country, would have been one of the factors which determined their choice of architect for Standen.

²⁵² 'Chesthill, by Aberfeldy, Perthshire (Hand-Written Transcript)', *The Peoples Journal*, September 1890, BFP.

²⁵³ Margaret Beale, 'Sep: 11th 1891 Chesthill', 11 September 1891, CIMG2224, BFP.

²⁵⁴ Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle*, 116.

²⁵⁵ Mark Swenarton, *Artisans and Architects: The Ruskinian Tradition in Architectural Thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 33.

²⁵⁶ Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle*, 117.

Part Two: A ‘house in the country’

2.1 Locating Standen

The building of Standen was a creative project that would ultimately reflect the Beales’ status and identity and their place in history. In other words, Standen was to be their version of a rural hereditary estate, it would anchor their family identity within the time-honoured tradition of the landed gentry. The notion of building one’s own house in the country was encouraged by the increased availability of building land. The venture was highlighted by contemporary periodicals such as *The House*, which in one article encouraged prospective house builders to build their own cottage that ‘[...] they may taste a little of the feeling of the old country families who for generations lived in the old manor house’.²⁵⁷ During the final quarter of the nineteenth century the landed gentry found it financially more viable to sell off some of their land for building plots rather than to farm it. Saint Hill Estate in East Grinstead, for example, owned by Robert Crawford (1801-1883) was sold ‘by degrees to various purchasers’ during his lifetime.²⁵⁸ When the estate was offered for sale by auction on the 7 July 1876, the sale particulars refer to the prospect of individual building plots suitable for gentlemen:

The High Road intersects the property for nearly two miles, and there are long frontages to other roads and the undulating character of the land and the great beauty of the views offer many valuable building sites for gentleman’s residences, near the town, without affecting the rest of the estate.²⁵⁹

It is possible that the Beales had known about these landed estates to the south of East Grinstead. An original copy of the sale particulars of the Saint Hill Estate of 1876 is held in the Standen Archive.²⁶⁰ They were certainly familiar with the area and the county of Sussex before Standen was built. Their sons had attended a preparatory school in Worthing in the 1880s and the family had

²⁵⁷ C.S.S. Johnson, “On building a house,” *The House*, Vol. 1, 1897, 220 in Wendy Hitchmough, *Arts and Crafts Lifestyle and Design* (Watson-Guptill, 2000), 39.

²⁵⁸ M. J. Leppard, *A History of East Grinstead* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2001), 84.

²⁵⁹ W H Sainsbury Gilbert, ‘Saint Hill Sale Particulars’, 7 July 1876, NTS.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

visited Eastbourne on several occasions to enjoy the healthy sea air.²⁶¹

Margaret Beale admired the Sussex countryside, 'I think it is very pretty', she wrote in a letter to her sister in 1880 describing the countryside around Eastbourne.²⁶² If they travelled by road,²⁶³ the journey to Eastbourne from London would have taken them through the towns of East Grinstead and Forest Row. Positioned on the edge of the Ashdown Forest, East Grinstead was an area of outstanding natural beauty and well served with amenities. It is understandable how it might have attracted the Beales to consider the area as a suitable location for their country retreat. According to Harrod's 1867 *Directory of Sussex*, the town was:

[...] well lighted with gas and supplied with excellent water and noted for its extremely healthy situation, the beauty and variety of pleasant walks by which it is surrounded. The scenery is grand and the views obtained from many an eminence within the neighbourhood cannot well be surpassed.²⁶⁴

East Grinstead also enjoyed a reputation for preserving its old buildings; in 1868, it could 'lay claim to being one of the oldest-fashioned places in the county of Sussex and to have preserved unimpaired many of the old houses which line the southern side of the main street.'²⁶⁵ Moreover, the town had good transport links, being easily accessible from London by train. Since 1855 there had been a London to East Grinstead service via Three Bridges, running four trains each way during week-days and two on Sundays. In the early 1880s, East Grinstead Railway station had been re-built to accommodate two additional lines, the Lewes and East Grinstead in 1882 and the Croydon and Oxted in 1884. From 1884 there were four train services a day from London Bridge to Brighton via Oxted and another four from London Bridge to Oxted. Good access to the area by rail encouraged city gentlemen like James Beale to participate in country sports. He was a keen golfer and by 1890 was listed as a

²⁶¹ They took their four children to there in May of 1880 to recuperate after contracting measles. Margaret Beale, 'Letter to Polly from 52 Grand Parade Eastbourne, Page 8', 13 May 1880, BFP.

²⁶² Ibid. 'Letter to Polly', 8.

²⁶³ The journey by train from London to Eastbourne was not long established, it would have been via a branch line at Eridge on the Tunbridge Wells to Lewes line, opened by the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway in 1880.

²⁶⁴ Leppard, *A History of East Grinstead*, 84.

²⁶⁵ J C Stenning, 'Notes on East Grinstead', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections, Relating to the History & Antiquities of the County*, by Sussex Archaeological Society, vol. XX (High Street, Lewes: George P Bacon, 1868), 143.

member of the Ashdown and Tunbridge Wells Golf Club in Forest Row. Although the course was situated in the midst of the Sussex countryside on the northern edge of Ashdown Forest, it was easily accessible by rail, as the club's entry in the *Golf Annual* of 1889 boasted: 'Brighton Railway issues special cheap tickets from London to members, available for eight days at Forest Row'.²⁶⁶ Thus, the East Grinstead area was an ideal location for the Beales' purposes; not only were there good train connections to London but it was also surrounded by beautiful countryside and a ready supply of building land available through the dispersal of larger country estates.

When Saint Hill Estate was sold to Kings College Professor and bacteriologist E. M. Crookshank in 1889 by J. K. Esdaile, Great Hollybush Farm, Standen Farm and Stone Farm were reserved from the sale.²⁶⁷ The following year, James Beale purchased these three small-holdings from Esdaile to form the Standen Estate (Fig. 54).²⁶⁸ It is possible that James Beale knew of Crookshank through his family connections to the medical profession as his younger brother Dr. Edwin Clifford Beale was in practice at the City of London Hospital at this time. A detailed description of each farm is outlined in the 1876 auction sale particulars for Saint Hill. Thus Hook and Stone Farms included Stone Farm House with seven rooms, and farm buildings, Stone Cottage and Willard's Bridge cottage and garden. The geographical terrain had distinguishable features, notably, in the centre of Stone Farm was 'an outcrop of lofty sandstone rocks', described as being 'similar to the well-known High Rocks at Tunbridge Wells'.²⁶⁹ Standen Farm was listed simply as 'a cottage with barn and yards'.²⁷⁰ Yet Holly Bush Farm, described as 'a beautiful pleasure farm' with 'views of great beauty and extent' was clearly depicted to appeal to wealthy purchasers, such as the Beales, who could afford to own the land for enjoyment rather than having to earn a living from it. The particulars marketed the property

²⁶⁶ John Bauchope, *The Golfing Annual, 1888-89* (London: Cox, 1889), 170.

²⁶⁷ Joan and Bernard Chibnall, 'The National Trust Southern Region Vernacular Buildings Survey. 5 & 6 Standen Cottages, Standen Estate', in *Great Holly Bush Farm East Grinstead, A Report Prepared for the National Trust.*, 1988, 17.

²⁶⁸ At this stage, the sale did not include a nearby property called 'Little Holly Bush' owned by George Brinkhurst and Mary Norman, although it was later purchased by James Beale on 30 June 1893.

²⁶⁹ Gilbert, 'Saint Hill Sale Particulars'.

²⁷⁰ All that now remains of the original Standen Farm is the old barn, a property that can be traced back to the time of Domesday Book. Stenning, 'Notes on East Grinstead', 141.

as a lifestyle choice, mentioning how it was a 'splendid site for the erection of a MANSION and formation of a park', encouraging buyers like the Beales to envisage the potential for a country home set within a parkland estate.²⁷¹ It comprised of 'a dwelling house with 2 parlours and six bedrooms, outbuildings, and a pretty garden, also farm buildings which included stables for eight horses, a large barn and a 'newly built double cottage'.²⁷² The rural location of the old farm house, which dated back to the fifteenth century, enjoyed an aspect that would certainly have appealed to James Beale, a keen horseman and game shooting enthusiast and to Margaret Beale, a devoted gardener and nature lover.

Referring to when they were first buying Standen Estate, James Beale wrote eagerly to his youngest daughter Helen Beale on 13 April 1890 to announce the news that he had taken her mother and sister Maggie to visit the 'country house he wanted to buy and they liked it very much'.²⁷³ On their visit to Holly Bush Farm that spring they would first have been met with a view of working farm buildings, barns and sheds, as depicted in this early photograph from one of the family albums (Fig. 55). Perhaps some of the appeal of the Holly Bush estate was that it recalled an idealised version of 'old rural England'; a small farming community hidden away, protected from the ravages of industrialisation. The conservation of historic buildings engendered patriotic sentiments, having been regarded as an elevating 'reminder of traditional values and past ways of life' since the middle of the nineteenth-century.²⁷⁴ For the Beales it would not have been unthinkable to imagine being part of a mission to ensure the preservation of such an ancient rural estate.

The estate was tucked away at the end of a narrow rock-lined lane to the north of Holly Bush Farm; it afforded seclusion and privacy yet it was only a few miles from the nearest town. The lane leading to the farm house was accessed from the West Hoathly Road: a narrow highway from East Grinstead town through an

²⁷¹ Gilbert, 'Saint Hill Sale Particulars', 9.

²⁷² Gilbert, 'Saint Hill Sale Particulars'.

²⁷³ James Beale, 'To My Dear Helen [from 32 Holland Park]', 13 April 1890, 2, IMG-20140909-00385, BFP.

²⁷⁴ Melanie Hall, 'Affirming Community Life: Preservation, National Identity and the State, 1900', in *From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877-1939*, ed. Christopher Miele (London: Yale University Press, 2005), 129-158 (129).

ancient rock-lined cutting called Frampost Hollow. The site enjoyed stunning views over a valley to the south, Ashdown Forest to the east and across a hillside to the south-west. As suggested in Part One, it is perhaps no coincidence that certain physical aspects of the site were reminiscent of their parents' country homes, both of which were surrounded by beautiful views and a picturesque countryside. Bryntirion, the home of James Beale's father, had a large garden which sloped down towards the River Mawddach as shown in a photograph taken during one of the family holidays (Fig. 56). The grounds to the south of Holly Bush Farm, which later became part of Standen's garden also sloped on a line going from north-west to south-east. Furthermore, the estate also contained a ready supply of stone which could be used for house building, a feature used when Bryntirion was built. Blackdown, Margaret Beale's family home, was similarly set in its own grounds overlooking rolling green fields, illustrated in an 1870 watercolour painting by her younger brother William Field (Fig. 57). The view at Holly Bush Farm was just as picturesque as that at Blackdown, revealed in a family photograph illustrating the extensive countryside views that could be seen from Standen's high vantage point (Fig. 58).

2.2 Collaborating with Philip Webb

The house grows up on the hill-side easily and naturally; the old farmhouse that might have been thought a blot and removed, falls in with and binds the group of stables with the offices, and with a kind of courtesy indicates the way to the entrance courtyard. Easy, natural and simple are the words one uses – but they apply to the result. It requires thought, sympathy - that wide human sympathy that we call art – to design such a house; care, and the loyal co-operation of the owner.²⁷⁵

Architect Halsey Ricardo's account of Standen, which appeared in the *Magazine of Art* in January 1900, described the house as a product of an artistic collaboration between designer and owner. From the outset, the design and building of Standen was a collaborative project between architect Philip Webb and the Beales. Starting the design from scratch meant that they had more

²⁷⁵ Ricardo, 'The House in the Country', 110.

freedom to be creative. There was more space available in a rural setting, as Hitchmough has pointed out, 'the form of the building, its use of materials and its relation to the site could be more expressive'.²⁷⁶ The creativity of Webb's architectural work was guided by a respect and consideration for nature, key Arts and Crafts values. These had developed in response to huge industrial, social and economic changes which had begun in the eighteenth century and gathered pace in the nineteenth. Led by William Morris, there was a common concern amongst leading Arts and Crafts protagonists over the effect of industrialisation of towns and cities and its impact on design, traditional skills and the lives of working people.

As one of the original founders of Morris & Co. and of the SPAB, Webb had worked closely with his friend William Morris and shared many of his ideals, especially those beliefs espoused by John Ruskin concerning nature's pivotal role in the aesthetic judgment of decorative work made by craftsmen. Morris outlined his ideas in a lecture called *The Lesser Arts* to the Trade Guild of Learning in December 1877, referring to the 'crafts of house-building, painting, joinery and carpentry, smiths' work, pottery and glass-making, weaving, and many others' he explained that;

[...] everything made by man's hands has a form, which must be beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent.²⁷⁷

For Morris, there were two sides to the aesthetic experience; it was important that decoration gave pleasure to its user and equally that a craftsman got pleasure from the process of its creation.²⁷⁸ These Ruskinian ideals also inspired Webb: for him the only way to produce something that was truly a work of art was to ensure that it not only harmonised with Nature but that the craftsman took pride in the finished product. Underpinning this vision was the idea of 'good work', a concept in which the control and creation of goods produced remained with an individual craftsman.²⁷⁹ 'Good work' produced

²⁷⁶ Hitchmough, *Arts and Crafts Lifestyle and Design*, 41.

²⁷⁷ William Morris, *Hopes & Fears for Art: Five Lectures*. (London: Longmans, Green, 1919).

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Jeffrey Petts, 'Good Work and Aesthetic Education: William Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Beyond', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42, no. 1 (2008): 33.

under these conditions contained authentic properties, qualities that were an essential requirement in determining the aesthetic appreciation of art.²⁸⁰ The model for such a concept of 'best practice' was historical, influenced by looking back in time to the medieval guilds and rural craft traditions.²⁸¹ In accord with Morris, Webb believed that old buildings were representations of lived experience and that they had a life beyond their physical frame.²⁸² Both men strove to protect what Morris called the 'special value' of an old building which included the originality of its craftsmanship and its significance as a symbol of historical continuity.²⁸³ The countryside, rather than the urban was therefore perceived by many sympathetic to Arts and Crafts ideals to be the site of fulfilling and enjoyable labour, a place for the production of 'good work'.²⁸⁴

The rural location of the Standen estate with its existing community of farm workers, some of whom relied on traditional skills, was an ideal setting for a new country home for a family whose values harmonised with those of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Almost as soon as the land purchase had been completed in September 1890, the Beales had taken over responsibility for the management of Holly Bush Farm and the estate. At that time, the Standen Estate, which consisted of Holly Bush Farm with two cottages, Standen Cottage and Stone Farm, with another two cottages housed a large number of estate workers and their families. Census records for 1891 indicate that there were a total of 56 residents (including children) living on the estate, many of whom had lived there for some time.²⁸⁵ Farm labourer Alexander Ross had lived with his family in one of the Holly Bush cottages for at least ten years.²⁸⁶ Clearly, an important part of the Beales' vision for Standen was to retain a working farm and estate, in which they would take an active management role. Their desire to

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 30.

²⁸¹ Susan Luckman, 'Precarious Labour Then and Now: The British Arts and Crafts Movement and the Ethics of Rural Cultural Work Re-Visited', in *Locating Cultural Work: The Politics and Poetics of Rural, Regional and Remote Creativity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 48–84 (48).

²⁸² Hall, 'Affirming Community Life: Preservation, National Identity and the State, 1900', 7.

²⁸³ Ibid., 8.

²⁸⁴ Luckman, 'Precarious Labour Then and Now: The British Arts and Crafts Movement and the Ethics of Rural Cultural Work Re-Visited', 49.

²⁸⁵ This included Holly Bush Farm House; it was occupied by Joseph David Lelean, the new 'Farm Steward' with his wife Ann, daughter Daisy and mother-in-law, the closest property to the site of the Beales' new house. '1891 England Census' (Ancestry.com Operations, 2005), Class: RG12; Piece: 788; Folio: 88; Page: 4; GSU Roll: 6095898., TNA.

²⁸⁶ '1881 England Census' (Ancestry.com Operations, 2004), Class: RG11; Piece: 1058; Folio: 21; Page: 15; GSU roll: 1341250., TNA.

preserve some of the characteristics of ancient rural farming life further exemplifies their arts and crafts outlook, especially since the notion was likely to have been ideologically motivated rather than financially necessary. They began by replenishing the furniture and textiles at Holly Bush Farm House, probably in readiness for occupation by a future farm manager. Within a month of completion, in October and November 1890, a number of household and furniture items had been ordered from Maple and Co. of London,²⁸⁷ and local suppliers, G. Bridgeland²⁸⁸ and A. & C. Bridgeland,²⁸⁹ of East Grinstead.

Attracted by the ideology of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Beales belonged to a reforming generation of clients who required an architect to design a house which 'reflected their progressive attitudes in a way that was modern, yet underpinned by good form'.²⁹⁰ As established members of the professional middle-classes, the Beales already moved in cultured social and artistic circles for which the building of a new home, whether it be an artist's studio or a country residence, was not unusual. It was natural that they sought to engage the services of an architect with a valued reputation amongst their London social circle. A building by Webb was considered by some to represent an art object in its own right, it was also a symbol of the owners 'artistic' status.²⁹¹ The Beales undoubtedly considered themselves part of such an 'artistic' community. Besides socialising in the right circles, they collected and appreciated art; furthermore, there were talented artists in the family, especially amongst Margaret Beale's relations.

However, it was not easy to become a client of Webb's unless you were personally introduced, a difficult endeavour since he actively shunned publicity.²⁹² As suggested in Part One, Webb was probably recommended to the Beales by the Ionides or the Tomes family, friends who were already using his services. Besides undertaking a number of minor projects at 1 Holland Park, Webb had also completed various additions to Upwood Gorse in Caterham for

²⁸⁷ Maple & Co, 'Bill of Sale', 29 October 1890, MS 256, WSRO.

²⁸⁸ G. Bridgeland, 'Bill of Sale', 31 October 1890, MS 257, WSRO.

²⁸⁹ Alfred and Charles Bridgeland, 'Bill of Sale', 1 November 1890, MS 258, WSRO.

²⁹⁰ Hitchmough, *Arts and Crafts Lifestyle and Design*, 42.

²⁹¹ Swenarton, *Artisans and Architects*, 41.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 38.

Sir John Tomes in 1888-89,²⁹³ and works to his son Charles Tomes's house and dental surgery at 37 Cavendish Square in June 1889.²⁹⁴ Sir John Tomes certainly took an interest in Standen's progress; on 22 September 1894, when the building work was nearing completion, he attended a site meeting with James Beale and Philip Webb.²⁹⁵

Returning to the start of the project, within six months of the completion of the land purchase of Holly Bush Farm and adjoining estates, James Beale visited Webb at his office on the 20 March 1891 to ask him to advise and design a house for Holly Bush Farm.²⁹⁶ On Webb's first visit to the site on 11 April 1891, his journal entry recorded that he met with James Beale to conduct a: 'General examination of the estate and first consideration of the site for the house'.²⁹⁷ One of Webb's initial tasks was to examine the natural characteristics, resources and orientation of the site. For him it was imperative to consider how the site's geographical factors would have an impact on the house design and subsequent building work. As his journal notes reveal, it was a huge influence on design decisions, such as 'weather tiling for upper storeys [...] as the building would be much exposed' and 'plenty of largish sand stone on the site for concrete and other purposes'. Webb's approach to his work at Holly Bush Farm was governed by his high regard for nature as he surveyed the site, taking care to note its natural characteristics. His principles, expressed in the ideals of the SPAB, would not only have made practical sense to the Beales but also have resonated with their benevolent attitude towards the countryside and ancient buildings. In tune with Webb, the Beales took an interest in historic buildings and would certainly have approved of his suggestion, that the 'sounder part of the farm buildings should be kept standing – namely the barn – which has a good roof'.²⁹⁸ Besides giving sound architectural advice, Webb also had the

²⁹³ Such as an extension to the study and main bedroom above it and the addition of a bay window to the drawing room in Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 297.

²⁹⁴ Philip Webb, '37 Cavendish Square, 14A Princes Street, Site Notes', 1889, SPAB.

²⁹⁵ Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy)', 22 September 1894, STA09/File 3, NTSR.

²⁹⁶ Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy)' 20 March 1891.

²⁹⁷ Philip Webb, 'Account for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy) - (A Record of Accounts and Fees Paid)', 1891, STA09/File 3, NTSR.

²⁹⁸ 11th April 1891, Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy)'

ability to empathise with his clients.²⁹⁹ When the question of water supply was discussed at their first site meeting he noted that 'Mr Beale has been thinking of a Windmill pump', an acknowledgement that he willingly considered his clients wishes from the outset. A photograph of Standen c.1895 taken from the east clearly features the tower of the windmill pump (Fig. 59). As a result of this meeting Webb produced the first Block Plan on 8 May 1891, detailing the disposition of the buildings for the site of the proposed house (Fig. 60). His initial 'Idea' for Standen was based on a long-house arrangement with a straight east-to-west cross passage.³⁰⁰ However, because James Beale liked the idea of a windmill pump which required a water tower Webb turned for inspiration towards the medieval Tudor fortified house Compton Wynyates with its enclosed central court.³⁰¹ Another courtyard to the north of the house was also shown in Webb's initial block plan. He proposed stable lodgings to form one side of a stable court-yard in place of Holly Bush Farm, the existing old timber-framed fifteenth-century house. It seems that this idea was short-lived for it was soon agreed with the Beales that old Holly Bush farm house would be restored and integrated sympathetically with the new building. It is hardly surprising that they agreed to preserve the old building since it would have been the 'country house' which first impressed the Beales', as mentioned by James Beale in a letter to his daughter Helen a year earlier.

Webb was as much interested in the interior design of a building as he was the exterior, naturally perceiving a building as a unified whole. It was a concept he first realised in 1859 at Red House in Bexley Heath, his first residential commission for William Morris who became his life-long friend.³⁰² Working closely with the Beales, Standen became an outstanding example of Webb's holistic approach to design. He not only ensured that the external design of the house was cohesive by setting the final height of the water tower by eye to achieve a balanced composition from all viewpoints, but he also applied his architectural design skills to create internal fittings and furnishings, such as fire

²⁹⁹ Peter Burman, 'Defining a Body of Tradition: Philip Webb', in *From William Morris: building conservation and the arts and crafts cult of authenticity, 1877-1939*. ed. Christopher Miele, (London: University Press, 2005), 67-100, (67).

³⁰⁰ Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 151.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Hermann Muthesius and Janet Seligman, *The English House (1904)*, vol. II (London: Crosby, Lockwood, Staples, 1979), 17.

surrounds, shelves, cupboards and lighting accessories, for a thoroughly integrated result.³⁰³

The interior architecture for Standen indicated on Webb's block plan was reminiscent of that used for Smeaton Manor in North Yorkshire, the country house that Webb had designed in 1876 for Ada Phoebe Godman and her husband, Major Arthur Fitzpatrick Godman.³⁰⁴ She was the daughter of Isaac Lowthian Bell, ironmaster, politician and art patron who commissioned Webb to design Rounton Grange in Yorkshire in the early 1870s. Although it is not known whether the Beales had ever visited Smeaton Manor, they would certainly have been aware of it from their business and family connections and James Beale's position at the Institute of Mechanical Engineers.³⁰⁵ Like Smeaton Manor, Standen's block plan of 8 May 1891 showed a dining room, library and drawing room arranged adjacently and projecting out at the south front of the house. The conservatory was also in the same position at Smeaton Manor but has a billiard room to the west of the north entrance instead of a business room.³⁰⁶ When Webb produced Ground Floor Plan No. 2, dated 3rd June 1891, it showed that the second dining room at the front of the house had disappeared and been replaced by a large hall (Fig. 61). Also the strong room had been shifted from the east service wing to be placed next to the business room. It was clear from the plans that each room had a designated function which facilitated the ordered running of the household, indicated by a list of the rooms labelled by function and size. Standen's planned interior was not only designed to direct the way that people moved through the house but it also divided its domestic space according to function, between the family and their servants. 'Proper' social relationships and gender roles advocated by Victorian

³⁰³ Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 152.

³⁰⁴ Kirk, 152.

³⁰⁵ Samuel Beale, James Beale's uncle, was owner of Beale & Co. which was incorporated in 1853 as Parkgate Iron & Steel of Rotherham by his Samuel's son William Lansdowne Beale (1829-1896). William married Elizabeth Sarah Beale (1838-1930), James Beale's older sister in 1886. James and Margaret Beale certainly knew of the branch of the Godman family based in Sussex at Muntham Estate, Horsham, as Sydney W. P. Beale (James Beale's son) and Charles R B Godman (b.1880) both served in the Royal Sussex Regiment. Godman later visited Standen from 10 to 12 October 1908; he was the nephew of Ada Godman and son of Percy Sanden Godman (b.1836). Furthermore, James Beale was solicitor to The Institute of Mechanical Engineers, his brother William Phipson Beale had been a member since 1877 and Lowthian Bell (proprietor of Clarence Iron Works) had joined in 1858 and was President in 1884.

³⁰⁶ Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 152.

beliefs were architecturally inscribed into the fabric of the nineteenth-century home through 'segregation and specialisation'.³⁰⁷ It therefore followed that Standen's internal design should provide some continuity with the Beales' home in Holland Park to effectively transfer the domestic ordering already established there.

At every stage of the design process, Webb consulted with the Beales on design decisions, either by letter or at site meetings. At a site meeting on 4 July 1891, Webb referred James Beale to Block Plan 4A, an up-dated plan from which he 'set out the axis and general position of the house on site'.³⁰⁸ The Beales clearly wished to make changes to Webb's initial plan, mainly to reduce the size for practical or financial reasons or simply to accommodate favourite pastimes such as photography, even if it meant the boundaries between servant and family space were less distinct. They had evidently discussed the alterations in detail judging by the inscription on Plan 4A in the architect's handwriting noting that 'Mr Beale decided to adhere to the plan as far as possible subject to considerable reduction in office block and some in main block'.³⁰⁹ Moreover, a pencil line 'A.B.' had been drawn by James Beale on the plan at their last meeting to indicate the extent that the office projection should be restricted. His wishes were incorporated in Plan 5A which was sent to him by Webb on 30 July 1891 (Fig. 62). It showed that the servants' wing was shortened by removing the butler's bedroom and serving room. In addition, a note by Webb at the foot of the plan detailed the contents of a memorandum sent by James Beale on 13 July 1891 regarding cellars and additional rooms required. These were listed as '2 Wine Cellars – 1 Beer Cellar – 1 accumulator room – 1 photographic room and a small place for cool larder' and were requirements mostly connected with domestic matters, except the photographic room.³¹⁰ Demonstrating a flexible approach, this activity was to be accommodated in Mrs Beale's Store, a room placed at base of the back stairs within the service wing, a space designated for servants.

³⁰⁷ Walker, 'Home Making', 824.

³⁰⁸ Philip Webb, 'Collection of Drawings: Standen (Sussex): Formerly Hollybush, East Grinstead, [42](1-73)' (RIBA, 1892), 184, RIBA Library, V&A London.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

Even when the Game Shooting season arrived, the Beales were still fully involved in Standen's design process. In August 1891, they travelled to Scotland to enjoy their usual shooting and fishing holiday at Chesthill (Fig. 63).³¹¹ Besides the Tomes, they were probably joined there by one or other Beale family groups, perhaps one of James's brothers, William Phipson Beale or Edwin Clifford Beale.³¹² Consequently, it is highly probable that Standen's design was influenced by the whole Beale party. It certainly would have been a well-discussed topic during evening meals at Chesthill that summer, not least because letters continued to be exchanged between architect and client requiring decisions and opinions regarding alterations that Webb was making to Standen's plans. After receiving a letter from James Beale on 16 August, Webb forwarded Plan 8A to him in Scotland on 22 August (Fig. 64). Essentially a modification of 6A, an earlier plan and it embodied the suggestions contained in James Beale's letter. Although the proposed library had disappeared and the north walls of the billiard room were now flush with the front of the house, the staircase was placed in the hall next to the billiard room. It was not until after a further letter sent by James Beale from Chesthill to Webb dated 27 August 1891, that Plan 9A (Fig. 65) was produced showing that the staircase had been moved from the hall to the area behind the porch, as it exists today. This amendment effectively ensured that the hall was now large enough for the family to use it as a living room for entertaining guests. It was then becoming fashionable to have a larger hall that was not just a passageway but a room that could be used as a flexible living space.³¹³ In debt to medieval precedents, it was in keeping with the modern trend towards a less rigid use of domestic space, discussed in Part Four. The changes made in Plan 9A also introduced a level of separation between the family's social and private domestic space since direct access to the first floor bedrooms from the Porch via a main staircase was no longer available. The plan also showed that the space for the conservatory had been moved southwards so that it was almost in line with the drawing room and dining room on the south front. This lengthened the east to

³¹¹ The property was situated by Aberfeldy, Perthshire.

³¹² It was reported 'on Chesthill Mr J S Beale and party, 51½ brace grouse' in 'The Moors', *The County Gentleman: Sporting Gazette, Agricultural Journal, and 'The Man about Town'* (London), 1891, 1154.

³¹³ Helen C. Long, *The Edwardian House: The Middle-Class Home in Britain, 1880-1914* (Manchester University Press, 1993), 34.

west cross-passage that stretched between the lavatories and W.C.s at one end, and the dining room at the other. Thus Webb succeeded in complying with the Beales wish to reduce the size of the house without losing any of the principal rooms. He cleverly maintained the size of the dining room by inserting a wall in the middle of the cross-passage so that space could be gained without blocking the passage. It also meant that one doorway could be used for servant access to the room from the dog-leg corridor and the other could be used by family and guests entering from the inner hall.

The agreeable working relationship between client and architect was managed without disruption throughout the holiday season that year. Plan 10A was drawn up by the 18 September 1891 and sent on to Scotland (Fig. 66). It detailed the layout of the first floor and attic in connection with Plan 9A, complete with a list of rooms and their dimensions, proposing ten family bedrooms on the first floor, two with dressing rooms attached, one bathroom and six rooms for servant use.³¹⁴ In the attic (second floor) there were to be five bedrooms, a box room and five rooms allocated to servants. At this point Webb must have been satisfied with the progress being made on the house design, for noted in pencil on his copy of the plans was the name of the Beale's landscape gardener, G B Simpson. Acknowledging the Beales' choice of landscape designer and his willingness to work with him, Webb sent Simpson a copy of Block Plan 11A and 12A, showing the area of ground that needed to be cleared.³¹⁵ At the next site meeting on the 13 October 1891 with the Beales present, Webb discussed site levels with Simpson in an effort to resolve an impending setback. If Simpson's site levels were adhered to then 'the corner of the morning room would be some 9' 6" above the ground' when compared to Webb's datum line, a difference that could have presented a real problem. However, Webb offered his clients a workable solution, noting in his journal that he 'could drop down some 2 or 3 feet below ground level near Walnut tree';

³¹⁴ Webb, 'Collection of Drawings', 184.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

clearly paying careful attention to an old tree that Margaret Beale would have been keen to preserve.³¹⁶

Whilst Webb was mindful of his clients' priorities, he also paid attention to the environment of the natural landscape at every stage of the building process. When he next visited the site on 7 November 1891 to meet with James and Margaret Beale and James Beale's brother, he noted that the layout of the building should take account of the existing trees to 'give a little more room to the Yew at the S.E. corner of the low office wing' and that 'the entrance court with the Walnut tree will come very well'.³¹⁷ Preserving the natural features of the site was as important to Webb as it was to the Beales, highlighted by a note in his journal that the ground should be safely lowered '[...] without injuring the W. Tree'.³¹⁸ Ever mindful of his clients' wishes, he wrote that if water could be located in the small pasture meadow on the north side of the lane 'a windmill pump would have good exposure there'.³¹⁹

By January 1892, as if in response to their discussions, the position of the walnut tree and yew tree were marked on the next set of plans that Webb submitted to the Beales. Plan 24 and 26 detailed a 'reduced size of house' for the ground and second floor (Fig. 67) and the first floor in Plan 25 (Fig. 68). They detailed a further reduction in the overall size of the house with no bedroom and dressing room on the first floor above the billiard room. Instead, the plans proposed that there should be a fixed lantern light in the Billiard Room ceiling and to maintain the number of rooms, an additional bedroom over the servants' quarter in the East wing.³²⁰ However, these adjustments were never adopted and had disappeared by the time the final set of plans for the Ground Floor [No. 1] (Fig. 69) and the First Floor [No.2] (Fig. 70) were prepared by Webb in July 1892.³²¹ The productive discussions over the plans for the design

³¹⁶ Philip Webb, 'Notebook for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy)', 13 Oct 1891, STA09/File 3, NTSR, 5.

³¹⁷ 7th November 1891, Philip Webb, 'Account for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy) - (A Record of Accounts and Fees Paid)'.

³¹⁸ Philip Webb, 'Notebook for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy)', 7 Nov 1891, STA09/File 3, NTSR, 7.

³¹⁹ Ibid. 8.

³²⁰ Room's 1 and 1A, Plans 10A, September 18th 1891.

³²¹ These plans formed part of the set incorporated into the building contract signed on 17th October 1892.

of Standen between Webb and the Beales demonstrates that they achieved a good relationship, based on mutual respect.

The full building specification prepared by Webb dated June 1892 described in detail how the stones for the building work should be quarried.³²² The style of stone-facing for Standen had previously been discussed at the site meeting between the Beales and Webb on the 14 May 1892. Webb's journal notes recorded that 'old stone walling at the back of the Ship Inn', located in East Grinstead town centre was an example of local stone-facing work that could be followed.³²³ The Beales may have known the Ship Inn as it was on the route from East Grinstead Railway Station to Standen. It was decided that where possible, stone would be quarried from the west end of the conservatory and a shed would be put up there so it could be easily worked.³²⁴ An early photograph of Standen's courtyard c.1893-4 taken by Webb's assistant William Weir shows the builders' shed that was probably used to work the stone (Fig. 71). Clearly, the incorporation of local stone from the site in the building of the house was an important feature for both client and architect. In his journal Webb noted precisely how the stone should be selected as if to emphasise the contents of a discussion with his client; 'the stone to be very particularly picked & only the best used for house facing – the second best sound stone to be used for facing retaining walls.'³²⁵

To comply with Webb's exacting standards the builder chosen to construct the house had to be capable of doing a good job. Although the Beales were not present when prospective builders were interviewed by Webb, they would have discussed his final decision. Two builders were considered; Mr. Garrett of Brighton and Peter Peters of Horsham. Webb was already familiar with the work of W. & T. Garrett of Brighton, he had used them for Constantine Ionides' house at 23 Second Avenue in Hove, and so a choice the Beales would have approved because of their friendship with the Ionides family. However, whether it was a matter of price or availability, the reason is not evident, but it was Peter

³²² 'West Street Quarry, down Mill Hill' in Philip Webb, 'Account for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy) - (A Record of Accounts and Fees Paid)', 4 July 1891.

³²³ Philip Webb, 'Notebook for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy)' - 14 May 1892, STA09/File 3, NTSR.

³²⁴ Ibid. (2).

³²⁵ Ibid.

Peters & Son who were engaged. John Hardy, appointed as Clerk of Works by Webb, was a trusted workman; he had worked for the architect on other recent projects such as Willinghurst in Surrey and Forthampton Court in Gloucestershire. The Beales undoubtedly engendered a very good working relationship with their architect and builder as work on the house commenced some time before they officially signed the contract on 17 October 1892.³²⁶ By this time much progress had been made, according to Webb's journal records for that day, '[t]he first floor joists over the East block were about half laid and 6 carpenters were at work'.³²⁷

Throughout the duration of the building project the Beales continued to meet on site with Webb at least once a month to check progress and make decisions about finishes and decorative style. By December 1892, with construction well underway, the Beales began to visualise the completed house and how they might experience the living space. Naturally, they discussed their plans with Webb, such as the treatment of the windows in their bedroom suite Rooms 10 & 11, and No. 3, the South Spare. Webb's journal for 27 December recorded that 'Mr & Mrs Beale decided to have shutters in the S.E. bedroom over Morning Room and in the bedroom over the Dining Room'. No detail was considered too small for their attention, such as the type of floor tiles for the Conservatory. Margaret Beale asked Webb whether there was an alternative to the plain, red, 9" tiles that were proposed.³²⁸ Although he did not provide an answer until later that year, his reply, in the form of a personal letter to Margaret Beale, demonstrated how well he understood his clients. Guided by his belief in Arts and Crafts principles which promoted harmony with nature, he stressed that 'these tiles, which we are using, are very good ones, and would look well; much better than any "fancy" new' which would 'be sure to disagree with the flowers'.³²⁹ His last point would certainly have been appreciated by a keen plants-woman. He also argued that the proposed tiles would stand up better to the wear and tear from spiked country shoes, a statement that would not have been

³²⁶ The tender was accepted by Webb on 5 July 1892, 'Peter's began work (before the agreement was signed) at his own risk' in *Ibid.*, 60.

³²⁷ Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy)', 17 October 1892.

³²⁸ Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy)', 25 March 1893,

³²⁹ Philip Webb, 'To Mrs James S Beale, "Holly Bush House"', 27 December 1893, MS 171, Standen Archive, WSRO.

lost on an advocate of outdoor, country life like Margaret Beale. Webb believed that his clients, those who would be living in the newly created domestic space should be consulted about storage and shelving requirements. It was especially important if a room was designated as a user's personal space, such as Margaret Beale's storeroom near the back stairs. In the same letter, referring to a previous conversation about additional fittings, he asked Margaret Beale to clarify what was required for 'your own storeroom'.³³⁰ Since they had previously discussed the possibility of adapting the Store Room for photographic use, Webb's letter confirmed that an extra coloured glazed frame 'with coloured glass for photographing purposes', was to be fitted to the window and 'a sink with water laid on'.

Besides working together on the organisation of storage space, Webb and Margaret Beale discussed how a communication system, such as a house bell system could be installed to connect the distinct spaces of the servants' and the family quarters. Asking Margaret Beale for a decision by letter in August 1893, Webb wanted to know precisely in which rooms the bell system would be operating.³³¹ In this letter, he made suggestions for additional bell connections and asked if she wanted a speaking tube installed from any particular passage or room. Webb clearly respected Margaret Beale's capacity to make informed decisions about things that affected how the internal space would function, seeking her approval on many aspects of Standen's internal design, including fixed architectural features. He ended his August 4 1893 letter by asking Margaret Beale to call into his office before she went away on holiday to 'see my indications of mantelpieces to fire-places'.³³²

Webb also co-operated with other members of the family to help them envisage the two-dimensional space of his architectural plans as usable, personal, living space. He replied to a letter from Amy Beale which had asked about wardrobe storage in Room No.1, her bedroom on the first floor. Instead of dictating the way that she might organise the room, Webb included a small sketch showing

³³⁰ Philip Webb, 'To Mrs James S Beale, "Holly Bush House"', 27 December 1893, MS 171, WSRO.

³³¹ Philip Webb, 'To Mrs J S Beale [from 1 Raymond Buildings]', 4 August 1893, MS 168, WSRO.

³³² Ibid.

two alternative bed positions (Fig. 72) and how her choice would determine the position of the wardrobe. He clarified that he would do his best to ensure that she got what she wanted, '[w]hen drawing out the wardrobe', he wrote, 'I will include as much of what you ask for as the space will allow, including the looking-glass on the door'.³³³ Thus, it was Amy Beale's choice to install a mirror on the outside of her bedroom wardrobe, not Webb's. This is clear evidence of family involvement in the creation of Standen which traditional architectural histories of the house such as Weaver's, as mentioned in the Introduction, failed to acknowledge.

Taking an active part in site meetings, Margaret Beale continued to work closely with Webb to plan Standen's decorative interiors. It was clear that she was considering the decorative scheme of the house in some detail, Webb's notes of the site meeting held on 11 November 1893 record that she asked for a 'rough tracing of the first floor plan to see [the] position of [the] doors etc. to [the] bedroom'.³³⁴ Earlier that year, Webb had visited Margaret Beale at Holland Park to discuss various matters relating to soft furnishings and kitchen fittings. She was clearly contemplating decorative schemes, perhaps even making curtains and seat covers as Webb left her with a list of windows requiring curtains. According to his journal notes, she queried '[h]ow to manage curtains to arches at West end of drawing room' and the 'little window in bay window', she also asked about seating to the window in the drawing room bay'.³³⁵ Another topic of discussion was the organisation of the kitchen. The domestic arrangements already in place at 32 Holland Park influenced her plans for Standen; it seems that Margaret Beale wanted some continuity between her urban and rural homes. The 'kitchener' oven in the London home, which according to Webb, both the cook and Mrs Beale liked, was cited as an example of what was wanted for the kitchen and scullery at Standen.³³⁶ The stove was likely to have been modern and substantial, as Webb noted, it required an opening of 6' wide x 5'.3" high. It was probably '[a] good coal burning range of modern

³³³ Webb, 'To Miss Amy S Beale, "Holly Bush House"', 2.

³³⁴ Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894', 11 November 1893.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15 April 1893.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

construction', the type recommended by respected housekeeping experts of the day, such as Mrs Beeton, in an article for *Hearth and Home* in 1892.³³⁷

Besides installing an up-to-date Smith and Wellstood kitchen range, the Beales chose other modern equipment and technology for Standen. They met Webb on site in June 1892 together with an electrical engineer, noted in Webb's journal as 'Mr. Robert Beale', to discuss an electrical lighting system for the new house. It is quite likely that the engineer was actually Bertram Robert Beale, the son of William Lansdowne Beale, one of James Beale's cousins.³³⁸ Two years earlier, whilst working for Messrs. Crompton & Co., Bertram had overseen the installation of electric lighting at Manor House, Waltham St. Lawrence, his father's home. The system was 'an 8 h. p. Priestmans' oil engine, Crompton dynamo and 53 E.P.S. cells with about 120 incandescent lamps'.³³⁹ The power generated was also used to pump water for the house. Perhaps encouraged by the tested results of their cousin's electric lighting system, the Beales were spurred-on to install electricity at Standen and settled on a steam-powered 'donkey' engine placed in an engine house next to the barn. 'Robert Beale' continued to advise Webb on electrical matters, calling on site again in December of 1893 to discuss the lighting for the stable yard.³⁴⁰ After the house was finished, he visited Standen in 1894 to stay for a couple of nights. He signed the visitor book as Bertram Robert Beale and included a bracketed, cryptic note; '(said to be his first visit!!)' which was a way of intimating that he had probably been there previously, albeit unofficially, as a 'family' consultant for the electrical works installed.³⁴¹

Thus, exemplified by the installation of electric lighting, the Beales were at once being 'modern while celebrating the craft traditions of the past'.³⁴² Their decision to incorporate modern technology into the building of Standen whilst patronising authentic craftsmanship and 'good work' is an example of the 'paradox at the

³³⁷ Mrs M. Beeton, 'Kitchen Gear', *Hearth and Home* (London), 1892, 929.

³³⁸ William Lansdowne Beale (1829-1896) of Manor House, Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire, was the son of Samuel Beale (1803-1874), James Beales' uncle.

³³⁹ 'Private House Lighting', *The Electrical Engineer*, 22 August 1890, 148.

³⁴⁰ Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy)', 21 December 1893.

³⁴¹ 'Visitor Book 1 1894-1910, Standen', 3.

³⁴² Abigail Harrison Moore and Graeme Gooday, 'Decorative Electricity: Standen and the Aesthetics of New Lighting Technologies in the Nineteenth Century Home', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 35, no. 4 (September 2013): 363-383 (363).

centre of the Arts and Crafts movement'.³⁴³ Webb encouraged the installation of modern technologies at Standen, probably instigated by the Beales, despite his principled engagement with past craft traditions. This certainly applies to his bespoke design work in relation to the light fittings in the drawing room. Remaining true to his traditional Arts and Crafts beliefs his design for the embossed copper sconces was hand crafted and referred to the natural form of the sunflower (Fig. 73).³⁴⁴

As work progressed on the house, at their regular monthly meetings the Beales collaborated with Webb on a range of issues relating to buildings of the wider estate. On these occasions he was careful to note down his clients' wishes, such as 'leave doorway through connecting wall between old house and stable yard'. Certainly, the preliminary plans for the stable block, drawn up by Webb in September of 1892 (Fig. 74) had changed substantially since the first Block Plan was produced in May 1891. The entrance to the stable courtyard had been moved to the west side and the old farm house was retained as a separate unit. The Beale's plans for the old farm house had clearly altered since the project began, coupled with their desire to preserve the ancient building, they realised they needed more accommodation for servants. In March of 1893 they met with Webb to discuss their plans whilst staying at Frampost, a large country mansion and estate next door to Standen which they later purchased.³⁴⁵ They agreed that Holly Bush Farm house was to be adapted to form two cottages that would house a 'coachman, gardener and 3 helps'.³⁴⁶ At the time, the Beales were planning to purchase Little Holly Bush Farm, a small farm house and parcel of land owned by local farmer, George Brinkhurst, next to their estate. The sale contract, finalised on 30 June 1893, meant that their country estate was now complete, consolidating their much-valued privacy. They no longer had to share the entrance road and had more freedom to organise their small farming community. It was planned that the farm manager, Mr Lelean, would vacate

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Philip Webb, 'To Mrs Beale', 7 July 1894, 2, MS 174, WSRO.

³⁴⁵ The property had been recently vacated and presumably they wanted to be nearby whilst the building work was progressing. The Beales' actually purchased Frampost estate in December 1903, possibly to preserve their privacy at a time when Coombe Hill Estate was being broken up into individual building plots for sale.

³⁴⁶ Philip Webb, 'Notes Made with Mr & Mrs Beale at Frampost', 25 March 1893, Digital Ref: IMG 9601, SPAB Philip Webb Archive.

Holly Bush Farm house and move to the newly purchased Little Holly Bush Farm. The subject was discussed in more detail with Webb again when the Beales stayed at Frampost in February 1894.³⁴⁷ His plans proposed an 'addition to the west side of the farm house' which effectively 'doubled the size of the cottages with a parallel range'.³⁴⁸

The Beales continued to work closely with Philip Webb to realise their vision for Standen, taking a detailed interest in all aspects of the building process. They even photographed the house in 1893 with scaffolding in place while the main part of the house was still being built (Fig. 75). Although it is not known which family member instigated the photograph, throughout the building process Margaret Beale had been constantly involved in decision-making and space-planning. As early as January 1894 she was keen to move furniture into their new holiday home, even though the building work was not complete. She pressured Webb to finish, to which he replied by letter: 'Your threat of sending furniture to the house "before long" is rather terrible! Perhaps the "before long", might mean by the end of February?'³⁴⁹ His letter had initially referred to the construction of a fire surround in a guest bedroom on the first floor, Room No. 9.³⁵⁰ It seems that Margaret Beale had acquired a large 7ft. 6in. walnut wardrobe that she was anxious to fit into the room, even if it meant altering the design of the fire surround. Webb endeavoured to comply with his clients wishes, aided by a sketch (Fig. 76), suggesting the small cupboard shown at 'A' was removed so that the wardrobe would fit into the space below the 'irregular form' of ceiling at 'B'. The wardrobe in question was probably antique and second-hand, it may have been surplus to their requirements at 32 Holland Park.³⁵¹ However, it was more likely to have been one of the items that once belonged to "Polly", Mary Emma Bell Davies (1848-1892) and husband William (1845-1891) of Croxley Green, Rickmansworth. When the Bell-Davies house was cleared after Mary's death, it was possibly their large wardrobe that

³⁴⁷ Philip Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894 (photocopy), 3 February 1894.

³⁴⁸ Joan and Bernard Chibnall, *The National Trust Southern Region Vernacular Buildings Survey*. 5 & 6 Standen Cottages, Standen Estate, 1.

³⁴⁹ Philip Webb, 'To Mrs Beale Holly Bush House', 12 January 1894, 2, MS 173, WSRO.

³⁵⁰ Probably named the 'Croxley' bedroom in memory of James Beale's sister Mary Emma (Polly) Bell Davis and husband William Bell Davies of 26 Croxley Green, Rickmansworth; they had died within a year of one another, in 1892 and 1891 respectively.

³⁵¹ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 19.

Margaret Beale was anxious should be moved into Bedroom No. 9 at Standen.³⁵² Another factor to substantiate this idea is that the room was generally referred to by the Beales as 'the Croxley'; probably named in memory of James Beale's sister and husband whose address was Croxley Green. It certainly would have provided a reminder of the Beales relatives who had recently died within a year of each other. Undoubtedly the wardrobe had a practical use, but it also represented family history and kinship ties to the extent that the design of the room was altered by Webb to accommodate it.

Thus collaboration between architect and client engendered the 'homeliness' of Standen. In a letter to Sir John Betjeman in 1972, John Brandon-Jones pointed-out that making space for the large wardrobe 'is a typical Webb attitude and is one of the reasons why his houses are so much more like home than those of more egotistical designers.'³⁵³ Brandon-Jones recognised the extent to which Webb went out of his way to work and collaborate with clients. In a speech given when Standen was opened to the public in 1977, Brandon-Jones recalled another example of Webb's working relationship with the Beales, personally told to him by Helen Beale, the youngest daughter;

[...] when she was a little girl at the time the house was built, she remembered this gentleman coming down and promising to build a little playroom for her at the other end of the conservatory [...] She told us that he said to her "if you give me a penny, I'll build a special little room for you", so she gave him the penny and he built the little room.³⁵⁴

When Webb's work at Standen finished, he revealed the nature of his relationship with his clients in a letter to James and Margaret Beale in July 1896. He had just opened a parcel from them containing an engraved silver snuff box sent in appreciation of his work:

The "memento" is a very pleasant reminder of many months of invigorating work carried out under the rather unusual circumstance of a

³⁵² Edwin Clifford stored a quantity of 'General Household Furniture' from August 14 to October 17 when it was then transferred to 32 Holland Park, see MS 260 Walter Taylor & Sons, 'Invoice to Clifford Beale Esquire', 14 October 1892, MS 260, WSRO.

³⁵³ John Brandon-Jones, 'Dear Brother John: Letter Ref: Meeting with Martin Beale, Helen Beale's Nephew', 3 October 1972, STA01/File 5, NTSR.

³⁵⁴ John Brandon-Jones, 'Standen Opening Ceremony Speeches', 5 May 1977, STA01/File 8, NTSR.

sympathetic watchfulness of my clients, (for I must make it double), Mrs Beale and yourself to wit.³⁵⁵

There was clearly a strong sense of collaboration between client and architect that was welcomed and appreciated by both sides, especially Margaret Beale's involvement. However, although the Beales had successfully commissioned and worked with Webb, a principled and artistically-motivated architect to design and build Standen, the story of its artistic inspiration would not be complete without discovering 'the artists', who in this case were mother and daughter, Margaret and Margaret S. Beale.

³⁵⁵ Philip Webb, 'To James S. Beale Esq. [from I Raymond Buildings]', 15 July 1896, MS 175, WSRO.

Part Three: 'The artists'

Everyone knows Mr. Hollyer's artistic photographs. His name has become a household word amongst those who can appreciate beautiful reproductions of good pictures.³⁵⁶

As the nineteenth-century closed, an article published in the *Art Journal* acknowledged the well-established reputation of London photographer Frederick Hollyer (1838-1933). He was especially favoured amongst artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and Aestheticism: 'His modest premises in Pembroke Square, Kensington became a place of pilgrimage for everybody who was in the aesthetic movement'.³⁵⁷ Since the 1860s, he had been photographing the paintings and drawings of artists such as Frederic Leighton and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. As Hollyer's obituary in *The Times* observed, he 'did as much for their [the artists'] popularity by reproducing their work as Ruskin did with his pen'.³⁵⁸ Hollyer produced photographic portraits of many famous clients, such as artists William Morris, G. F. Watts and Walter Crane, also writers including John Ruskin and celebrities such as actress Ellen Terry. Hollyer regularly made his studio available on Mondays for portrait commissions and on one of these in 1893 or 1894 his clients were Margaret Beale (Fig. 77) and her daughter Margaret (Fig. 78).

The Beale women were following in the footsteps of other creative and intellectual women, such as artisan designer May Morris, William Morris's daughter, and Miss Margot Tennant, a pivotal member of the 'Souls' social group and later Mrs Asquith. A comparison of their photographs by Hollyer reveals that the composition of Margaret Beale's portrait is not dissimilar to Hollyer's 1886 photograph of *May Morris* (Fig. 79) but with an added soft focus background which blurs the distinct wall panelling behind, evident in both portraits. Maggie Beale's photograph meanwhile is framed by a window, resembling the backdrop used for Hollyer's portrait of *Miss M Tennant (Mrs Asquith)* produced in 1890 (Fig. 80). Significantly, the Beale women were photographed by Hollyer at the same time as the design and building of

³⁵⁶ E. F. V, 'Industrial Art.', *Art Journal*, 1839-1912, November 1900, 349.

³⁵⁷ 'Obituary "Mr. Frederick Hollyer."', *The Times (London)*, 24 November 1933, 19, The Times Digital Archive.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

Standen was being led by an architect known for his impressive portfolio of artistic homes. As clients of Webb, it was only natural that ‘the artists’ of the Beale family should be showcased as subjects of a Hollyer portrait.

3.1 Inspired by nature: Margaret Beale’s garden artistry

The creation of Standen’s garden was to be a lifetime project for Margaret Beale; it began as soon as they took possession of the Standen estate. She recorded the progress of the garden in a year-by-year *Garden Diary* of which the very first line proudly announced: ‘Took possession of Holly Bush in September 1890’. Even though the house design was barely started, she was keen not to miss the opportunity of the first spring planting, recording for 1891 that ‘we planted the two upper plantations also the yew hedge and began the kitchen garden’.³⁵⁹ The vision for the garden at Standen was led by Margaret Beale whose interest in botany, nature and horticulture, as mentioned in Part Two, can be traced back to her childhood. One of the books she read in 1857, at the age of ten, was *Glimpses of Nature* by Jane Loudon. Loudon was the author of a number of popular gardening books written for ladies in the 1840s which inspired many middle-class women to take up gardening in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶⁰ Her texts proffered gardening to women readers as a release from a home-bound, constricted lifestyle: an idea which scholars such as Sarah Bilston and feminist critic, Sharon A. Weltman have associated with the beliefs expressed by John Ruskin in Lecture II – *Lilies, of Queens’ Gardens*, published in 1865. The ‘territory’ of women’s authority, described by Ruskin as ‘Queens’ Garden’s’ was ‘not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere’,³⁶¹ and this has been interpreted to mean that women’s activity encompassed a broader and even public realm.³⁶² Weltman argues that Ruskin’s garden space was both ‘home’ and ‘not-home’ in the sense that it

³⁵⁹ Margaret Beale, ‘Garden Diary, 1890-1932’, 1890, 1, MS 116, WSRO.

³⁶⁰ For example see Jane Loudon, *Gardening for Ladies, And, The Ladies Companion to the Flower-Garden* (New York: John Wiley, 1851).

³⁶¹ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 9th Edition (Orpington, Kent: George Allen, 1888), 113.

³⁶² Sarah Bilston, ‘Queens of the Garden: Victorian Women Gardeners and the Rise of the Gardening Advice Text’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36, no. 01 (March 2008): 1-19 (2).

included England and wider 'civilised' society.³⁶³ Understood in this way, gardening activities provided an avenue for many women in the late-nineteenth century who wished to participate in the public sphere without being accused of flouting conventions of respectability.

When Loudon's texts on gardening for women were suggesting the possibility of new freedoms, in the early 1860s, Margaret Beale was a teenager at school in Malvern. Even then, it is possible that she recognised the liberating potential of the outdoors. As a keen observer of nature's flora and fauna she adored the countryside, enthusing in a letter to her parents 'we go for such nice walks in the evenings, all down the fields in the Valley, gathering flowers, scrambling over stiles [...]'.³⁶⁴ A photograph from Margaret's school days at 'Elmsdale' depicts her with a group of classmates on one of their country rambles (Fig. 81). However, her early interest in nature and gardening was mainly inspired by her family home which stood firm in her imagination as a constant object of comparison. Malvern was 'never so beautiful'; she wrote to her mother in the spring of 1863, however, she continued, there were not any 'nice trees like we have'.³⁶⁵ The trees she fondly remembered in her garden at home are depicted in a c.1880s family photograph (Fig. 82). Even as a young married woman in the early 1870s, she still looked forward to seeing Blackdown's garden. In a letter to her mother she wrote: 'it will be jolly to see you all and the garden, though I am afraid that it will not be looking its best unless we have rain before then'.³⁶⁶ Clearly, the garden of her childhood home at Blackdown inspired a huge creative force in Margaret's life, one that informed her vision for Standen some decades later. For example, her *Garden Diary* records that in 1893 she brought to Standen 'a quantity of perennials from Blackdown'.³⁶⁷ In 1901, she made a list of the trees on Blackdown's lawn with their measurements, such as 'Abies Nobilis 30ft.';³⁶⁸ she had planted the same species above Lime Walk at

³⁶³ Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, "'Be No More Housewives, but Queens": Queen Victoria and Ruskin's Domestic Mythology', in *Remaking Queen Victoria*, ed. Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 10 (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997), 119 cited in Bilston, 'Queens of the Garden,' 2.

³⁶⁴ Margaret Field, 'My Dearest Papa [letter from Elmsdale]', 6 May 1863, 2, CIMG0086, BFP.

³⁶⁵ Field, 'My Darling Mother', 4.

³⁶⁶ Margaret Beale, 'Dearest Mother Letter from 41 Gordon Square', 1870s, CIMG0246, BFP.

³⁶⁷ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1893.

³⁶⁸ Margaret Beale, 'Diameter of Trees on Blackdown Lawn: Handwritten Note', 1901, MS 651-656, WSRO.

Standen in 1896.³⁶⁹ Other notable women gardeners who were contemporaries of Margaret Beale similarly demonstrated strong links between places of home and creativity. For example, Gertrude Jekyll's inspiration came from the West Surrey scenes she had experienced in childhood.³⁷⁰

Margaret Beale's interest in gardening was also fuelled by her visits to prominent London gardens such as those at the Inner Temple and at Kew. Such visits would have provided her with future ideas for her later garden project at Standen. She followed the weather and was acutely aware of how it affected her favourite plants, often mentioning her observations when she wrote to her parents; 'I suppose the frost will have spoilt the chrysanthemums', she wrote in 1872, 'I meant to have gone to the Temple gardens to see them but have not, it has not been a good year for them'.³⁷¹ Situated within the grounds of the Inner Temple, the historic garden visited by Margaret Beale was responsible for instigating an annual show of chrysanthemums and the Royal Horticultural Spring Flower Show from 1888 until 1911. Furthermore, as a regular visitor to Kew Gardens, after one particularly dry spell in 1872, Margaret described the condition of the garden in a letter to her mother, revealing her interest in plants and keen sensitivity to a garden's aesthetic qualities:

[...] the gardens were dreadfully dry, the grass almost as much burnt as though it were August, we were just too late for the Rhododendrons, but it still looked very pretty.³⁷²

At the time of her visit, Kew Gardens was in the midst of a new landscaping programme; seven avenues radiating from the Pagoda were being laid out. The avenues and vistas comprised of trees belonging to the same family, such as Cedar Vista 1871, Acacia Avenue 1872, Holly Walk and Isleworth Vista of 1874.³⁷³ Margaret Beale probably enjoyed the scenic views of Isleworth Vista; it focussed on the distant tower of Isleworth Church effectively uniting Kew Gardens with the landscape beyond its boundaries.³⁷⁴ The idea of creating the

³⁶⁹ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', February 1896.

³⁷⁰ Mavis Batey, "Landscape with Flowers: West Surrey: The Background to Gertrude Jekyll's Art," *Garden History* 2, no. 2 (April 1, 1974): 13.

³⁷¹ Margaret Beale, 'Letter to Her Mother, Mrs A S Field', 11 November 1872, 3, BFP.

³⁷² Margaret Beale, 'Letter to Her Mother, Mrs A S Field, "Monday"', c 1872, 1-2, BFP.

³⁷³ Ray Desmond, *Kew: The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens* (Random House, 1998), 226.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

impression that a garden merges seamlessly with the countryside beyond its perimeter was a device she later employed when developing Standen's garden.

Many of her plans for Standen's garden would have been guided by some of the respected experts who were publishing articles and books at that time.³⁷⁵ She would have been aware of contemporary debates over garden style raging between local expert horticulturalist, William Robinson of Gravetye Manor and architects, J.D. Sedding and Reginald T. Blomfield. Robinson championed the 'plantsman's picturesque' and the natural use of plants, while Sedding and Blomfield's views were based firmly on the merits of an architect's garden design. Their differing opinions on garden style were thrashed out in their publications of 1892, copies of which were owned by Margaret Beale. In his Preface to *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, Robinson warned that architects should 'set their own house in artistic order' before criticising landscape gardeners, citing 'Clouds' by Philip Webb as one of the best new houses which was 'not any worse for its picturesque surroundings'.³⁷⁶ In *The Formal Garden in England*, Blomfield retorted, accusing Robinson of visualising the garden as a 'Botanical Museum'.³⁷⁷ However, both factions of the garden design debate argued that their philosophy was shaped by artistic considerations. 'Garden as art', as art historian, Anne Helmreich has contended, was strongly related to the principles of Aestheticism.³⁷⁸ Aesthetic ideas which advocated harmony between house and grounds and envisioned the garden as a haven for creativity and individuality, were powerful influences on garden design at the end of the nineteenth-century.

The Arts and Crafts architect, J. D. Sedding, had initially fuelled the discussion in 1891 in his book *Garden Craft Old and New* which criticised Robinson's 'Gardenesque' style, emphasising that modern landscape gardeners should not

³⁷⁵ The Beales' owned copies of *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens* by William Robinson 1892 and *The Formal Garden in England* by Reginald Blomfield, 1892. They remain in Standen's book collection.

³⁷⁶ William Robinson, *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, (London: John Murray, 1892), Preface, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/37607>.

³⁷⁷ Reginald Theodore Blomfield, *The Formal Garden in England* (London, 1892), 1892, vi.

³⁷⁸ Anne Helmreich, "Body and Soul: The Conundrum of the Aesthetic Garden," *Garden History* 36, no. 2 (2008): 275.

ignore a garden's connection with Nature and Art.³⁷⁹ As Sedding stressed, the 'artistic English garden' should naturally merge with the woodland beyond its boundaries so that it 'stops without ending':

Around or near the house will be the ordered garden with terraces and architectural accessories, all trim and fit and nice. Then comes the smooth- lawn, studded and belted round with fine trees, arranged as it seems with a divine carelessness; and beyond the lawn, the ferny heather-turf of the park, where the dappled deer browse the rabbits run wild, sun-chequered glades go out to meet, and lose "by green degrees" in the approaching woodland, [...].³⁸⁰

It was early in 1891 when the Beales employed G. B. Simpson to produce a garden design for Standen which consisted of a few formal, more geometrically shaped borders nearer to the house and irregular, curvy shaped borders around the gardens outer reaches (Fig. 83). It was an aesthetic scheme in sympathy with the idea of creating an unbroken view between the house and the countryside beyond, effectively harmonising home and garden. Such a concept clearly appealed to Margaret Beale, evidenced by the deep stone ha-ha that she had constructed at the edge of the South garden lawn to ensure a continuous view of the landscape. As a family photograph of c.1910 illustrates, the cultivated garden area runs seamlessly into the distant paddock (Fig. 84).

Gardens with endless scenic views expressed a tangible sense of freedom for those who owned country homes. According to Sedding, they were a reflection of the individual behind their creation:

True, the garden itself is hedged in and neatly defined, but behind the garden is the man who made it; behind the man is the house he has built, which the garden adorns; and every man has his humours; every house has its own conditions of plan and site; every garden has its own atmosphere, its own contents, its own story.³⁸¹

Although Sedding refers to a male gardener, in the late-nineteenth century his view of the garden as a space which fostered individuality was increasingly being adopted by women gardeners who embraced its potential as an

³⁷⁹ Sedding trained in the office of architect G.E. Street, joining in 1858 the same year that Philip Webb left to start his own practise. By 1875 he had set up offices in Oxford Street next door to Morris & Co. John D Sedding, *Garden-Craft, Old And New*, New edition (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), 2.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

unrestricted but sheltered retreat. This notion is illustrated in a photograph from the Beale family archives which depicts two women gardening at Bryntirion, probably Beale relatives who are almost concealed by a mass of flowers and plants, as if in a shielded haven (Fig. 85). The image is reminiscent of *A lady in the garden at Kelmscott Manor*, painted in 1883 by Marie Spartali Stillman which captures the essence of an ideal Aesthetic garden as a place where woman's spirit is nurtured through the activity of gardening (Fig. 86). Women's creative ability in the garden was increasingly being praised, for example *Country Life* published an article in 1898 which firmly agreed that women were more creative than men as 'they are generally likely to be able to think out better than a man the grouping of colours in a garden'.³⁸² There also existed a whole genre of garden texts written by women, such as *Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden* of 1897 by Maria Earle which conveyed the personal pleasure that women enjoyed when actively pursuing an interest in gardening.³⁸³ It was a pastime that clearly offered women like Margaret Beale, who owned a copy of Earle's book, possibilities for expanding their creativity. As Earle notes in her first chapter; 'Half the interest of the garden is the constant exercise of the imagination'.³⁸⁴ Thus gardening pursuits offered middle- and upper-class women an outlet for artistic expression and a reprieve from some of the restrictions which otherwise governed their life indoors.³⁸⁵

Besides reading literature, Margaret Beale personally conferred with respected gardening experts to add to her knowledge and learn more about garden craft. As her grandson, Edgar Barton Worthington, later explained on a visit to Standen: 'she was a tremendous gardener' [...] and 'with a lot of assistance from the best known gardeners' she created and designed a lot of Standen's garden.³⁸⁶ She was acquainted with William Robinson and familiar with his garden at Gravetye Manor, his home since 1884. She probably visited there in May of 1896; a letter from Robinson to Margaret Beale confirmed that 'his

³⁸² "Country Notes," *Country Life*, April 23, 1898, 494.

³⁸³ Sarah Bilston, "Queens of the Garden: Victorian Women Gardeners and the Rise of the Gardening Advice Text.," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36, no. 01 (March 2008): 8.

³⁸⁴ Maria Theresa Earle, *Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden* (London: Smith, Elder, 1897), 7.

³⁸⁵ Sarah Bilston, "Queens of the Garden: Victorian Women Gardeners and the Rise of the Gardening Advice Text.," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36, no. 01 (March 2008): 8.

³⁸⁶ Doctor Barton Worthington, Transcript of 'A record of the memories of Standen', Tape recording (Transcribed), 15th June 1999, 7, No. SO/ST/01, NTS.

gardener Mr. Jenkinson will be happy to show you anything we have'.³⁸⁷

Although Robinson did not actually visit Standen until later, in another letter he signals his approval: 'My man has sent me such news of your beautiful garden [...].'³⁸⁸ Robinson's vision of a natural English garden was inextricably bound up with art, underpinned by the devoted study of nature in the Ruskinian sense.³⁸⁹ For example, Robinson favoured maintaining mature trees in their natural form rather than replacing them with specimens that were clipped and planted in rigid geometrical lines.³⁹⁰ Such principles would have appealed to Margaret Beale's deep and sensitive feeling for nature and influenced her garden layout and plant choices at Standen. She instructed Farm Steward, Mr. Lelean, to make a list of all Standen's extant trees, demonstrating that she was not only interested in a garden's aesthetic appearance, but also keen to take into account the existing trees naturally growing on the estate.³⁹¹ Robinson was also founder of *The Garden*, an illustrated weekly gardening journal that Margaret Beale undoubtedly consulted. Confident in her gardening competence, she sent a photograph of the Jasmine Nightshade growing on the outside of the conservatory wall with a note demonstrating her horticultural knowledge (Fig. 87):

The plant figured was planted in May 1895, the aspect south-west. It has had no protection other than a mulching at the beginning of the winter, and had flowered each year from May till November. The photograph was taken on October 26 1897.³⁹²

Not only was the photograph evidence of her success as a skilled gardener, it also verified her artistic talents, showcased in her ability to create aesthetic floral arrangements which brought the house and garden into harmony. Further confirmation of her status as respected gardener and plantswoman appeared in another of Robinson's publications called *Gardening Illustrated* in 1912.³⁹³ An

³⁸⁷ William Robinson, 'Letter to Mrs Beale', 30 May 1896, MS 717, WSRO.

³⁸⁸ William Robinson, "To Mrs Beale," August 30, c.1896, MS 252, WSRO.

³⁸⁹ Anne Helmreich, "Body and Soul: The Conundrum of the Aesthetic Garden," *Garden History* 36, no. 2 (2008): 276.

³⁹⁰ Robinson, *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, 50.

³⁹¹ Of 102 trees counted, only 18 were recorded as dead or dying in J.D. Lelean, 'List of Trees - Handwritten Note', c 1891, STA18:6, NTSR.

³⁹² William Robinson, *The Garden: An Illustrated Weekly Journal of Gardening in All Its Branches*, vol. 53 (London, 1898), 28.

³⁹³ S. Arnott, "Natural Rocks in a Sussex Garden," *Gardening Illustrated*, September 23, 1911, 567.

article entitled 'Natural Rocks in a Sussex Garden' featuring Standen's Quarry Garden, described as 'well and beautifully done' was written by Samuel Arnott, a recognised authority on hardy plants and member of the Royal Horticultural Society since 1899 (Fig. 88).³⁹⁴ Margaret Beale's Garden Diary records that the construction of the Quarry Garden by R. Potter of James Backhouse & Son of York took about four months, starting on 20 October 1896, and was complete by March 20 1897.³⁹⁵ A photograph of 1902, from a Beale family album of Margaret Beale talking to a gardener in the Quarry Garden, illustrates the extent that she was actively involved in the day-to-day running of Standen's garden (Fig. 89).

Further sources of inspiration for the garden came from other country houses such Nymans Estate in Handcross, where Margaret Beale gathered information on garden design and climate. The garden of the main house at Nymans was in the process of being created by Ludwig Messel, who had purchased the property in 1890. A handwritten note, presumably made after Margaret Beale visited the estate, summarises key horticultural elements in a matter-of-fact manner: 'Nymans: Stands about 450ft above sea level, soil much like ours. Most shrubs are in a garden with a wall on three sides and high firs on the other.'³⁹⁶ She conducted her garden research thoroughly and in a manner befitting a professional gardener. To help with decisions, such as which types of plants and trees would best flourish at Standen, she religiously observed the weather, particularly rainfall levels. She kept records of rainfall amounts at Blackdown from 1891: made 'Weather Notes' about Standen from 1892 to 1935 and kept a record of Standen's rainfall from 1895. Her passion for Standen's garden did not diminish her continued interest in the smaller, urban garden at 32 Holland Park. In 1893 for example, she noted the planting of two new lilac trees, some *Pyrethrum* flowers and that the Almond tree first blossomed on 6 March.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ John M. Grimshaw, "Arnott, Samuel (1852-1930)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press, May 2009), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/96748.

³⁹⁵ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', October 1896.

³⁹⁶ Margaret Beale, "Nymans," ca. 1900, STA/21:4, NTSR.

³⁹⁷ Margaret Beale, '32 Holland Park [Garden Notes, 1893-1912]', c 1893, MS 644, WSRO.

Margaret Beale's garden at Standen featured a number of discrete, individual spaces, each with their own characteristics. These 'garden rooms' were linked by pathways and terraces and cultivated with plants and trees specially chosen by Margaret Beale; some were enclosed by walls and hedges and others were designated with specific functions. Although G. B. Simpson's original design for the garden was not strictly adhered to, it is now possible to recognise some of its original elements as current work on Standen's Garden Restoration project progresses, shown in a detailed plan of each phase (Fig. 90). For instance, one of the areas that Margaret Beale first attended when the building work on the house commenced in 1892 was shown on Simpson's plan as the Tennis Lawn, marked on the current 'Revival Plan' as 'No. 9 Croquet Lawn'.³⁹⁸ In the late-nineteenth century, it was widely recognised that a holiday home in the country should be equipped with good sports facilities and outdoor pursuits, so an early start on the tennis lawn would have been a priority. A family photograph of a group playing tennis c.1900 illustrates how Standen was the place where the Beales actively participated in outdoor sports (Fig. 91). They also played croquet, lawn bowls and enjoyed swimming in the dipping pond. Furthermore, subscriptions to local Cricket and Lawn Tennis clubs in East Grinstead were begun soon after Standen was built.³⁹⁹ Although the design of Standen's garden allowed for a tennis lawn to incorporate sports activities, it did not diminish Margaret Beale's mission to create a beautiful, artistic garden that balanced aesthetic qualities with function and utility. The banked flower beds which surrounded the tennis lawn, for example, were planted to provide a stunning aesthetic backdrop for sports games and entertainment (Fig. 92). A quantity of brightly coloured plants and shrubs were bedded including a number of *Iris Germanica* in 1895, three hundred mixed daffodils in 1896, *Azalea Mollis* in 1898 and *Magnolia* in 1900. She also added various plants in 1897 around the pond in the Dell, to the south of the Tennis Lawn, where the family went swimming in the summer. The aesthetic aspects of the garden, exemplified by family photographs was just as important as its function as a place for outdoor exercise and healthy living. The area is depicted in a photograph of c.1903-4 framing an aesthetic view of the swimming pond, particularly the way in which it

³⁹⁸ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1892.

³⁹⁹ Margaret Beale, 'East Grinstead Subscriptions 1895 & 1896', c 1896, Box 26, NTS.

captures the effect of the vegetation reflecting on the water's surface (Fig. 93). Another photograph, a close-up shot of lilies in flower, possibly taken by Margaret herself or one of her daughters, was similarly artistically framed (Fig. 94). As Helmreich has pointed out, even though a tension existed between a garden as a work of art and a garden as a place of sport, 'aesthetic' gardens rooted in naturalistic design which incorporated sports were justified on the basis that a garden was a kind of Utopian project which could transform both body and soul.⁴⁰⁰ With a kitchen garden and service wing providing produce for family meals and entertaining, as well as a 'fruit garden' just below the tennis lawn, the physical body was certainly well sustained by Margaret Beale's garden.

The family's aesthetic sensibilities would equally have been nourished by a number of beautifully planted areas each with distinct characteristics. Each outdoor room of the garden was individually created by Margaret Beale, often by mixing naturalistic spaces with formal styles. For example, a formal styled Rose Garden begun in 1892 was next to the relatively untamed niche of the pond used for swimming, as a later photograph of Amy Beale's three daughters illustrates (Fig. 95). The Rose Garden consisted of a 'formal', circular bed with a central sundial that could have been inspired by the suggestions for bedding designs on page 166 of Margaret Beale's copy of George Nicholson's *Illustrated Dictionary of Gardening* of 1884 (Fig. 96). She initially planted the bed with Tea Roses, adding four 'Peace' roses in 1904.⁴⁰¹ The boundary edge was enclosed by an oak frame structure supporting climbing roses, a glimpse of which can be seen in the background of the family photograph in Figure 95. In 1894, Margaret Beale had been elected Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society, the same time as Lady Helen Vincent another woman gardener of high social rank. Not only was Vincent a respected intellectual and member of the 'Souls' art-loving fraternity but she also keenly developed her garden at Esher Place.⁴⁰² It is quite possible that Margaret Beale would have been inspired by such an influential and artistic contemporary who also added a rosary to her

⁴⁰⁰ Anne Helmreich, "Body and Soul: The Conundrum of the Aesthetic Garden," *Garden History* 36, no. 2 (2008): 287.

⁴⁰¹ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1904.

⁴⁰² Rev. W. Wilkes, ed., "General Meeting March 27 1894," *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, XVII (1895): xi.

garden at the turn of the twentieth century featuring a centrally placed sun dial and high arches of 'Crimson Rambler Roses'.⁴⁰³

The Conservatory on the south-west corner of Standen was also perceived as part of Margaret Beale's garden plan when she was choosing plants for the garden. It was essentially an inside 'garden room', a threshold space between house and garden which enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of a garden space whatever the weather. Its position next to the Drawing Room, accessed through two French doors was praised by Lawrence Weaver who thought that Webb 'had succeeded in making it an integral part of the architecture' rather than being attached as an after-thought, a feature which enhanced the unity of the whole design.⁴⁰⁴ It resonates with the integral conservatory at James Beale's childhood home in Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, as illustrated in Figure 11. An internal image of the Conservatory at Westbourne House, perceived as an indoor garden room, connects interior domestic space to the outside world of nature and countryside (Fig. 97). In the same way, Standen's Conservatory, as an 'inside garden' space, offered Margaret Beale a further opportunity to realise and expand her interest in the collection, cultivation and aesthetic arrangement of foreign and exotic plants. It perhaps represented a miniature version of a Palm House, a glass and iron structure housing plants from warmer climes, which were often part of substantial botanical gardens like those in Kew and Birmingham. Private Victorian gardens had been inspired for some time by the scientific and botanical ethos underpinning botanical gardens.⁴⁰⁵ It meant that aspiring amateur plant hunters and gardeners like Margaret Beale sought to acquire exotic and new species when they travelled abroad. In March 1895, on a tour through France to Monte Carlo she recorded in her garden diary that she bought 'palms, climbers' etc. chiefly for [the] Conservatory at Cannes [costing] 191 francs'.⁴⁰⁶ Some of these plants are visible in a family photograph c.1900 of Sydney, Margaret Beale's son, seated in the Conservatory at Standen

⁴⁰³ "The Rose Garden at Esher Place," *The Garden: An Illustrated Weekly Journal of Gardening in All Its Branches*. v.60 (1901): 213.

⁴⁰⁴ Lawrence Weaver, 'Country Homes and Gardens Old and New: Standen, East Grinstead, A Home of Mr James S Beale', *Country Life*, 7 May 1910, 670.

⁴⁰⁵ Harriet Ritvo, "At the Edge of the Garden: Nature and Domestication in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (1992): 373.

⁴⁰⁶ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1895.

(Fig. 98).⁴⁰⁷ Her visits to botanical and sub-tropical gardens such as those at Bath, Abbotsbury and Kew also inspired her ideas for stocking Standen's garden with rare and unusual plants. She made lists of her favourites; using only Latin names she was keen to improve her plant expertise and horticultural knowledge. For example, at the Botanical Gardens in Bath she noted down *Andromeda arboreum* and at Kew *Ribes speciosum*, both of which she ordered for her garden in April 1903 from V.N. Gauntlett of Green Lane Nurseries in Redruth.⁴⁰⁸ Family holidays in Europe and further afield also proved to be an invaluable source of horticultural information and inspiration to Margaret Beale. She recorded trees and shrubs during their stay in Heidelberg in 1893, such as *Abies concolor* [white fir tree], later buying one for Standen in February 1896 from Knapp Hill Nursery in Woking.⁴⁰⁹ In Eisenach, she visited Karthaus Garden in August 1897 and saw *Desmodium penduliflorum*; her diary later recorded that she purchased 'three *Desmodium* from Gauntlett' in 1911.⁴¹⁰ One of the highlights of Margaret Beale's plant-gathering endeavours came during their world tour when visiting Japan in April and May of 1907. One of the letters written to her father that excitedly described the variety and types of plants she saw, particularly focussed on their aesthetic qualities:

Please tell Harry and Daisy they really must buy some of the large flowered pink cherry trees as soon as possible. They are perfectly lovely, the buds are bright pink, there is another pale pink cherry which grows in a weeping fashion but I don't know if it can be bought in England, Gauntlett has the large flower kind I know.⁴¹¹

On 14 May they visited a wholesale dealer at a nursery a few miles away from the garden at the Kameido Temple in Ikao, ordering peonies and cherry-trees, (Fig. 99).⁴¹² A later entry in Margaret Beale's Garden Diary confirmed that 'twelve Cherries from Japan were planted' by February 1908.⁴¹³ She also made a separate note of each tree and where it was planted in the garden; for example a 'Benishidare' weeping pink Cherry was planted on the green and a

⁴⁰⁷ The plants were purchased from the Nabonnard's Nursery at Golf Juan on Friday 8 March in Margaret Beale, "'1895" [Itinerary Monte Carlo], 1895, 2, CIMG0176, BFP.

⁴⁰⁸ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', April 1903.

⁴⁰⁹ Anthony Waterer, 'To James S. Beale', 12 February 1896, MS/354, WSRO.

⁴¹⁰ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1911.

⁴¹¹ Margaret Beale, 'My Dearest Father [from Miyako Hotel Kyoto]', 13 April 1907, 7, 20e, BFP.

⁴¹² Maggie Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 1907-1906, 60, May 1907, Digital Ref: NTS.

⁴¹³ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1908.

'Fugenzo' Cherry, an ancient Japanese species with dark pink flowers, above the rock garden.⁴¹⁴

It was not just the family who enjoyed the aesthetic beauty of Margaret Beale's garden; many of her visiting friends commented on its attractiveness and turned to her for garden advice. Her friend and neighbour, Aglaia Coronio, a well-known member of Holland Park's artistic community visited Standen on at least two occasions; one confirmed by a letter of thanks to Margaret Beale, enclosing a sketch of the three trellises they discussed during her visit: 'the first little one is ours and the second in oak is what I want to have' (Fig. 100).⁴¹⁵ Another visit, which was likely to have been between March 1903 (when Theodore Coronio, Aglaia's husband died) and her own death in 1906. She enthused about the garden, enclosing some Greek Mallow Seed in a thank-you letter sent to Margaret Beale the next day:

[...] -this day will be among my most pleasant memories. I like to think of you all moving about so prettily in that lovely garden and so thoroughly appreciating its beauties which are certainly great.⁴¹⁶

It seems that it was not unusual for their conversations about garden beauty to mention the gardens of Aglaia's artist friends: 'I am so disappointed with the Massacon [Massaroco]', added Aglaia to the bottom of the letter, 'I quite hoped it would do more for you than it did for Watts. I do so wish it would'. Another friend of Margaret Beale's, Anne Wilberforce from 'Bramlands' in Henfield, also admired Margaret's garden and turned to her for horticultural advice. It was a friendship that was most likely kindled through their husbands' work in the legal profession, Anne wrote to Margaret soon after her visit to Standen, probably sometime between 1902 and 1911. 'The recollection of your lovely garden consoled us for a tiresome return journey', she extolled, inviting Margaret Beale back to her house for lunch the next week; 'I am trying to make a little rose garden, she explained, 'would you give me advice?'⁴¹⁷ Margaret Beale certainly got great pleasure from gardening, as she told daughter Helen in a letter in April 1902:

⁴¹⁴ Margaret Beale, 'Cherries from Japan', February 1908, MS 656, WSRO.

⁴¹⁵ Coronio, 'Letter to Mrs Beale, Thursday'.

⁴¹⁶ Aglaia Coronio, 'Letter to Mrs Beale, Wednesday', c 1905, CIMG3490, BFP.

⁴¹⁷ Anne Wilberforce, "Dear Mrs Beale," September 17, c.1902, CIMG3481, BFP.

I had a lovely time in the garden, there are lots of nice flowers out and we have much improved the rose garden, the messy grass under the oak tree has gone and rocks put in place.⁴¹⁸

She shared her passion with her daughters, particularly Maggie, who worked with her mother in the garden until Margaret Beale was well into her eighties (Fig. 101). The physical hard work in maintaining the garden did not deter them, as Maggie described in a letter to her sister Helen Beale in 1916:

In this last week of sunny spring days Mother and I have done much hard gardening – weeding the border under the oak tree in the rose garden, & round the lake, & the border where the Benthamia is etc. Mother goes at it twice a day, & I in the afternoons when my hospital work is over.⁴¹⁹

Clearly, amongst her friends, family and the expert gardeners that she knew, Margaret Beale was respected for the beautiful garden that she created at Standen; her gardening endeavours enabled her to express creativity and personality. Recognition of Margaret Beale's garden artistry is acknowledged today by the National Trust garden restoration project which is carefully restoring and replanting the gardens at Standen to her original scheme.

3.2 'A connoisseur of things beautiful': Margaret S. Beale

Auntie Maggie, an artist trained at the Slade and in Paris, remained unmarried and was a connoisseur of things beautiful. She had a powerful influence on us all and especially during tours abroad.⁴²⁰

A description of Margaret S. Beale, fondly referred to as Auntie Maggie by one of her nieces, acknowledges that the family turned to her as an authority on aesthetic taste and artistic concerns. Thus, on matters connected with art, the family listened to Maggie: 'Aunt Mag', recalled her niece Phyllis Wager 'became the artistic one of the family which helped a lot, [she] 'led the rest of the family'.⁴²¹ It is highly likely that her mother, Margaret Beale would have been guided by Maggie's artistic flair when making decorative and furnishing choices

⁴¹⁸ Margaret Beale, 'Dearest Helen', 11 April 1902, GIMG1286, BFP.

⁴¹⁹ Maggie Beale, 'Dear Helen', 12 April 1916, Batch 2: Letter 3, NTS.

⁴²⁰ Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories, Part II, "More about the People"', c 1990, 17, Digital Archive, NTS.

⁴²¹ Mrs Phyllis Wager, Mrs Wager's memory of Standen - Transcript, September 1999, 14, SOSTSO 3A, NTS.

for Standen, especially when advice was required on aesthetic appearance and harmonising colour schemes. Maggie's creative talent and her interest in art and all things beautiful were engendered at home from an early age. It is certainly significant that her childhood homes in London were situated in neighbourhoods frequented by artists and inhabited by those who loved art. Gordon Square, where she lived for the first three years of her life, was close to University College London and the Slade School of Art, the institution that her great uncle Edwin Wilkins Field helped to found in 1871. As a very young child she might have seen the comings and goings of the art school students in the area; the 'Slade girls' could be recognised by their 'brightly embroidered pinafores' in the early days.⁴²² In 1875, when Maggie was only three years old, the Beales had moved to 32 Holland Park, an area notable for its links to celebrated artists and their patrons. As outlined in Part One, many residents of the Holland Park neighbourhood sought an individual sense of beauty by incorporating Arts and Crafts ideas and Aestheticism into their everyday lives, noticeable by the style of their clothes and the way their home was decorated.

It is not difficult to imagine how growing up in such an artistic environment would have influenced Maggie's ambition to pursue a career in the arts. At home, she would have seen her mother diligently working on *Lotus*, a vividly-embroidered wall-hanging designed in 1875-1880 by Morris & Co. which is now in the V & A, London (Fig. 102). Her mother's interest in embroidery would have kindled her own enjoyment in embroidering and creating textile designs.

Examples of her needlework remain in Standen's collection, from a simple pin holder and cushion that she produced as a child (Fig. 103) to more elaborate cushion covers designed and embroidered by her as an adult (Fig. 104). One of the sources of her passion for bold colours and modern design was perhaps inspired by the brightly coloured picture books she read as a young child (Fig. 105).⁴²³ For instance, the Randolph Caldecott picture book that she was given one Christmas called *The House that Jack built*, published in 1878, was not only colourful but contained romantic images of rural life. It was the first in a series of

⁴²² Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2004), 269.

⁴²³ The photographic portrait was taken at the studio of renowned art photographer Oscar Gustave Rejlander in April 1874 when she was almost two.

picture books to be illustrated with brightly coloured drawings and represented the beginnings of a new pictorial framework that generated a sentimental impression of the English countryside, as his illustration of 'Jack's country house' depicts (Fig. 106).⁴²⁴ It is possible that Caldecott's simple and romantic drawing of a beautiful house in the country was re-imagined by Maggie when she accompanied her parents as they first viewed Hollybush Farm in 1890. Moreover, almanacs with designs by former Slade School student Kate Greenaway would have been another source of artistic inspiration. They were given to Maggie each Christmas by Mrs Clark, probably a family friend or governess, between 1883 and 1887 (Fig. 107). The idyllic, delicately coloured Greenaway images of pretty young girls dressed in regency fashions and smocks certainly inspired artistic and liberal-minded parents when it came to dressing their children in the 1880s.⁴²⁵ As a portrait photograph taken with her older sister Amy in 1877 illustrates, Maggie clearly liked the idea of posing with a 'Greenaway' style flower basket (Fig. 108).

Maggie's education in her late teenage years continued to reinforce her interest in art and culture and her sense of individuality. She attended Allenswood, a finishing school for ladies in Wimbledon run by Marie Souvestre, a formidable French woman who was noted for her feminist beliefs and progressive ideas and highly regarded in intellectual cliques.⁴²⁶ Souvestre's establishment offered Maggie Beale and young women like her, a wide-ranging education which encouraged self-discipline and independence. Significantly, many of Maggie's school friends from her Allenswood days went on to become well-known in the art and literary world. For example, Sibyl Halsey (1874-1950) pictured standing next to Maggie in a school photograph of 1891 progressed to be a distinguished interior decorator after becoming Lady Colefax in 1910 (Fig. 109). Dorothy Strachey (1865 - 1960), of the Bloomsbury Group Stracheys, pictured

⁴²⁴ Robert J. Desmarais and Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, Randolph Caldecott: His *Books and Illustrations for Young Readers*, (University of Alberta, 2006), 11.

⁴²⁵ Robert DeMaria Jr, Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher, *A Companion to British Literature, Volume 4: Victorian and Twentieth-Century Literature, 1837 - 2000*, (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 273.

⁴²⁶ Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume 1: 1884-1933*, (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993), 103.

in the centre of the image, became a writer and translator.⁴²⁷ She married painter Simon Bussy (1870-1945) in 1903 and her younger sister Philippa Strachey (1872-1968), probably introduced the Beales to artist Arthur Melville. In October 1896 Philippa stayed at Standen for twelve nights at the same time as Arthur Melville, Ethel Constance Croall and her father David Croall.⁴²⁸ During his stay Melville painted a watercolour of Standen as a personal thank-you gift to Mrs Beale (Fig. 110).

Family links with the London art world undoubtedly influenced Maggie Beale's artistic ambitions and would have fuelled her desire to attend art school. Her second cousins, Mary Sargent Florence and her younger brother, sculptor Francis William Sargent (1870-1960) had impressive credentials.⁴²⁹ Mary had been a Slade student under the headship of Alphonse Legros between 1876 and 1892.⁴³⁰ She had also spent a short period at the artists' colony in St. Ives Cornwall between the years 1883 to 1888, producing paintings such as *Katherine Talbot Wallace* in 1883, which clearly indicates her allegiance to the social realism and impressionist inclinations prevalent among Newlyn artists at that time.⁴³¹ Furthermore, in the late 1890s she had built an artist's studio at her home in Lords Wood, Marlow, initially using it to plan large frescos for Oakham School. Significantly, it was at her studio that the initial plans for the Women's Guild of Arts were hatched in January 1907 when a letter was sent out to leading women artists inviting them to become founder members.⁴³² Francis W. Sargent was one of Standen's early visitors, staying there for three nights with his sister Ethel in September 1894.⁴³³ During the visit, he probably told Maggie Beale about his intention to enrol at the Slade School of Art, where he studied

⁴²⁷ A Beale family link to the Stracheys was later established through her younger brother James, who married Alix Sargent-Florence, daughter of Mary Sargent Florence (1857 -1954).

⁴²⁸ Standen Visitor Book 1, 16. Arthur Melville married Ethel Croall in December 1899.

⁴²⁹ Cousins of Maggie's parents, James and Margaret Beale; they were the children of Henry Sargent and his wife Catherine Emma Beale. Catherine was the daughter of Samuel Beale (1803-1874) uncle to Maggie's father James Beale.

⁴³⁰ Sargent Florence was likely to have attended before her marriage in 1888.

⁴³¹ Marion Whybrow, *St Ives, 1883-1993: Portrait of an Art Colony* (Antique Collectors' Club, 1994), 211.

⁴³² Zoë Thomas, 'At Home with the Women's Guild of Arts: Gender and Professional Identity in London Studios, c.1880-1925', *Women's History Review*, 2 June 2015, 2.

⁴³³ 'Visitor Book 1 1894-1910, Standen', 16.

from 1895 to 1896.⁴³⁴ As a sculptor, his preferred medium was marble; his style was in keeping with what was then termed 'New Sculpture', identified by its extravagant aesthetic character.⁴³⁵

On Maggie's mother's side of the family, there were other talented artists and painters, such as her great uncle, Edwin Wilkins Field and his artist son Walter. As mentioned in part one, the Beales had purchased paintings created by Walter Field and other society members such as Carl Haag and George A. Fripp in the late-1870s and 1880s. Besides the Field relations from Hampstead, Maggie's uncle William Field (1848-1885) was a skilful amateur who painted many views of Blackdown in the 1870s (Fig. 111). There was an artist in the Martin family on Maggie's maternal grandmother's side, evidenced by a sketch book in the family archive which is full of detailed pencil sketches. Landscape scenes, ancient ruins and holiday destinations were subjects which inspired many of Maggie's paintings and drawings throughout her life (Fig. 112).

Family holidays in England and abroad certainly stimulated Maggie Beale's development as a competent artist, providing her with a rich source of subject-matter. During her teenage years, for example, she sketched and painted landscape and seaside scenes while on holiday in Southwold, Suffolk in 1887 (Fig. 113). Notwithstanding her artistic family background, the connection between holidays, travel and the countryside was a motivating force in her quest to be an artist. Furthermore, her desire to validate her status as a serious artist through formal training at art school would have coincided with her parents' plans to build a holiday home in the country. It was also significant that Webb, known as an architect whose clients were invariably patrons of the arts or renowned artists with their own studios, was chosen by James and Margaret Beale to design Standen. Thus, it would have seemed entirely fitting that their new 'artistic' home should have an 'artist' and for Maggie Beale, the required credentials could be obtained through formal training at the Slade School of Art, the establishment her great uncle Edwin helped to create.

⁴³⁴ In 1931 Maggie commissioned him to sculpt a bust of her mother which remains on display in the house today.

⁴³⁵ Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture in 20th Century Britain: A Guide to Sculptors in the Leeds Collections* (Henry Moore Institute, 2003), 313.

In comparison with the art schools of the state system, the rules governing the Slade School of Art were less restrictive. There was no formal entrance requirement, applicants were generally admitted once their drawings had been approved and they had been interviewed by the governing professor. In allowing women to enrol under the same terms as men, which gave 'both sexes fair and equal opportunities',⁴³⁶ the Slade's progressive policy was popular with women, attracting pupils from the middle and upper classes.⁴³⁷ Such ideas would have resonated with Maggie's parents; as Unitarians they believed that women's education was just as important as men's.⁴³⁸ This philosophy is certainly exemplified by the Beales' lived experience of Standen; Margaret Beale's independent outlook meant that she took a leading role in creating the garden and organising the internal decorative scheme of the house. Besides fostering progressive views on education and gender, Unitarian religious beliefs were also instrumental in facilitating professional art practice for Victorian women.⁴³⁹

In 1896, at the age of twenty four, Maggie Beale enrolled at 'the Slade', as it was widely known, to study Fine Art. She studied there for six terms under the professorship of Fred Brown, finishing in 1900 and returning for a refresher term in 1905 just before embarking on a world tour with her parents and younger sister Helen.⁴⁴⁰ There is no evidence to suggest that she needed to study art to enhance her career prospects or to earn a living, as the Beale family were comfortably wealthy. Although it is assumed that Maggie aspired to be a serious artist, it was not necessarily an occupation that was readily approved by Victorian parents. In considering whether a daughter should be allowed to attend art school, parents sometimes faced a dilemma over issues of respectability.⁴⁴¹ Margaret and James Beale were 'Victorian' parents who would have been well aware of social conventions regarding suitable occupations for their unmarried daughters. Even though they were in favour of further education

⁴³⁶ Charlotte J. Weeks, 'Women at Work: The Slade Girls.', ed. Marion Harry Spielmann, *The Magazine of Art* 6 (January 1883): 325.

⁴³⁷ Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 271.

⁴³⁸ Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power, and the Unitarians in England, 1760-1860* (Longman, 1998), 8.

⁴³⁹ Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1993), 26.

⁴⁴⁰ University College London, Letter to Mr. O. Garnett, Ref: Margaret S. Beale, 15th April 1992, NTSR, Box: STA21, Folder: 4.

⁴⁴¹ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 26.

and opportunities for women, social expectations meant that the decision to allow their daughter Maggie to undergo professional training at an art institution was not straightforward. Some of the women who attended the Slade School in the 1890s appropriated characteristics widely associated with the figure of the New Woman when producing images of themselves or their friends.⁴⁴² Thus Maggie's attendance at the Slade could have been interpreted by some as a contravention of feminine respectability. However, the chance of parental approval was greatly enhanced with the existence of a relative already working in the profession.⁴⁴³ In Maggie's case, her desire to train at the Slade would have been deemed acceptable on the grounds of her family background, her school network and London social circle. As Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland have asserted, the creative output of a female artist was 'bound up with the space she inhabited and the grid of social and spatial relations in which she operated'.⁴⁴⁴

Undoubtedly, the creation and building of Standen, an artistic home with its own artist's studio would have swayed Maggie's decision to attend art school. A room on the second floor at Standen was initially designated as a 'studio'; noted in Margaret Beale's *Holly Bush Furnishing Book* as Bedroom 29, shown on Webb's plan (Fig. 114). Aspiring women artists like Maggie Beale would have viewed the possession of an artist's studio at home to be synonymous with professional art training. Professionalism in the world of the artist had traditionally been claimed as a man's domain right up until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It meant that female amateurs whose craft was perceived as a required expression of femininity had invariably struggled to be recognised as serious artists.⁴⁴⁵ In a bid to gain credibility, women artists placed an emphasis on acquiring studio spaces, 'the acquisition of a studio was extremely

⁴⁴² Alicia Foster, 'Gwen John's Self-Portrait: Art, Identity and Women Students at the Slade School', in *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, ed. David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry (Manchester University Press, 2000), 174.

⁴⁴³ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 26.

⁴⁴⁴ Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland, 'Local places/global spaces: new narratives of women's art in the nineteenth century' in *Local/global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century* (Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 4.

⁴⁴⁵ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 9.

important for women artists and was instrumental in defining their professional status between c.1880-1925'.⁴⁴⁶

As an art institution, the Slade had a reputation for encouraging women artists; according to Gladys Beattie Crozier, writing in the 1910 edition of the *Women's Encyclopaedia*, 'it was a place where women students have always done well'.⁴⁴⁷ Given her family background and social contacts, it would have been a natural choice for Maggie Beale. The classes were packed full with women, as a watercolour by Maggie of a class of Slade students illustrates (Fig. 115). Likely to have been painted during her first couple of years there, it depicts rows of women artists in front of their easels with what appears to be the figure of a gentleman tutor. At the time of Maggie's enrolment, Fred Brown was professor, having replaced Legros when he retired in 1892. Brown had previously been trained at the South Kensington schools and then Westminster School of Art and encouraged talented artists Wilson Steer and Henry Tonks to join him at the Slade as teachers.⁴⁴⁸ All three artists were part of a core group of members in the New English Art Club [NEAC], an exhibiting society that organised exhibitions twice a year.⁴⁴⁹ As tutors, with a detailed knowledge of selection committee requirements they trained their students accordingly, encouraging them to show their work at NEAC exhibitions.⁴⁵⁰ In their first year, these students would have spent a period of time drawing in the Antique Room 'with a sheet of Ingres paper and a piece of tomato coloured chalk to draw the Discobolus and the Venus de Milo'.⁴⁵¹ In the second year, when they were competent enough they were moved onto Life and Composition Classes. Although the Slade was considered to be the most progressive art school in London at this time, differences between female and male students were emphasised by the organisation of certain spaces which segregated the sexes, such as the women's rooms in the basement of the building, next to the lower

⁴⁴⁶ Zoë Thomas, 'At Home with the Women's Guild of Arts: Gender and Professional Identity in London Studios, c.1880–1925', *Women's History Review*, 2 June 2015, 22.

⁴⁴⁷ Gladys Beattie Crozier, 'The Slade School of Art' in *Every Woman's Encyclopaedia*, vol.1 (London:1910), 564.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 565.

⁴⁴⁹ Kenneth McConkey, *The New English: A History of the New English Art Club* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006), 75.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ Susan Chitty, *Gwen John: 1876-1939* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), 36.

life rooms.⁴⁵² They still observed some old-fashioned conventions, particularly regarding women's exposure to nudity.⁴⁵³ They were stringently segregated and never saw male models completely nude; even with a female model, women were required to leave the room when the tutor entered.⁴⁵⁴ However, this did not prevent Maggie practising; it would seem that the atmosphere at home, probably Standen, was less restrictive, as she was able to perfect her figure drawing skills freely, evidenced by sketches she made c.1903-4 tracing the muscle form of a sparsely-clad male (Fig. 116). The style and form of Maggie's sketches are reminiscent of those produced by her fellow student Edna Waugh in the late 1890s.⁴⁵⁵ Life classes were seen as an essential way to explore form and to this end Tonks taught his students to closely examine the model at every stage of the drawing process.⁴⁵⁶ Some of the later pencil drawings that Maggie made of her family at Standen, particularly in those sketched in the Drawing Room, display the skills that she had learnt at art school, discussed in detail in Part Four.

Although figural compositions and drawing studies generally attracted more attention than landscape painting at the Slade, it was Professor Brown's intention that students should experience a 'highly trained direct view of nature'.⁴⁵⁷ Students were encouraged by Brown and his tutors to bring in landscape work created over the holidays for them to critique. Maggie's artist portfolio, which contains watercolours of the Lake District, the West Country and also some flower paintings was probably produced during the holidays.⁴⁵⁸ Encouragement and inspiration was likely to have come from her tutor Philip

⁴⁵² Foster, 'Gwen John's Self-Portrait: Art, Identity and Women Students at the Slade School', 170.

⁴⁵³ Chitty, 36.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Usually in pencil or black chalk typically displaying a bold outline to reveal the shape and muscle structure of the model see John Fothergill, ed., *The Slade; a Collection of Drawings and Some Pictures Done by Past and Present Students of the London Slade School of Art* (London: R. Clay & Sons, 1907), Plate 43 & 44.

⁴⁵⁶ Emma Chambers, "'Slade School Influences on the Camden Town Group 1896-1910'", in *The Camden Town Group in Context*, ed. Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, and Jennifer Mundy, Tate Research Publication, 2012, accessed 25 February 2013. www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/emma-chambers-slade-school-influences-on-the-camden-town-group-1896-1910-r1104373.

⁴⁵⁷ Crozier, 'The Slade School of Art', xxx.

⁴⁵⁸ Margaret S Beale, *Artist Portfolio*, Watercolours, Box 21, NTS.

Wilson Steer, whom she fondly remembered throughout her life.⁴⁵⁹ Stimulated by his admiration of J.M.W. Turner in the 1890s, Steer had become interested in painting landscapes from what he considered to be Britain's best scenery. He often left London at the end of the summer term to travel to the country.⁴⁶⁰ He painted views from places such as Richmond, Ludlow, Stroud and Chepstow, such as *Bird-nesting, Ludlow*, 1898. This painting was part of a series of pictures that Steer painted between 1896 and 1906 of an area he explored as a child with his father. The sketchily painted children immersed in nature searching for nests amongst the trees captures a sense of nostalgia, recalling the innocence of his youth.⁴⁶¹

Steer's fascination with British landscape scenery could be explained by its close association with Englishness and national identity.⁴⁶² At a time when rural life was thought to be in decline, artists painted landscape scenes of 'pastoral simplicity' in search of some stability and a connection to myths of an idyllic countryside.⁴⁶³ Maggie similarly liked to paint landscape scenery, in particular places connected with the coast or inland lakes and waterways. One of her paintings, entitled *Whiddon near Chagford* demonstrates Maggie's attempt to practise modern painting techniques; she uses broad sweeping brush strokes with a loose impressionist style to instil expression in her rendition of the country scene (Fig. 117). Although her landscapes are not imbued with Steer's sense of nostalgia, she clearly expresses her love of the countryside and empathy with nature, sentiments aligned with the Arts and Crafts ideals which informed the creation of Standen. One of Maggie's favourite places for painting and drawing outdoors was Standen's garden, illustrated by a family photograph, c.1898 of Maggie and a friend sat at their easels on Goose Green (Fig. 118). Another photograph features her easel set up behind a family group in the Rose Garden (Fig. 119).

⁴⁵⁹ She remembered him years later after his death ordering a copy of the pamphlet entitled "In Memoriam Philip Wilson Steer" from The Sherwood Press after he died see 'Miss Beale, Order to Sherwood Press, Letter University of Glasgow :Manuscripts Catalogue :accessed 18 February 2013, special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/search/detail_c.cfm?ID=20253.

⁴⁶⁰ Ysanne Holt, 'Nature and Nostalgia: Philip Wilson Steer and Edwardian Landscapes', *Oxford Art Journal* 19, no. 2 (1 January 1996): 37.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 36.

One of the reasons that the Beale family respected Maggie as a person to consult on matters of aesthetic taste was that whilst at the Slade, she had trained with highly gifted artists, such as Gwen John and Edna Waugh. Among the men she knew were Ambrose McEvoy, Augustus John, William Orpen, Harold Gilman and Albert Rutherson, to name but a few.⁴⁶⁴ They were part of a clique which included Maggie at the school, who shared their keen sense of fun. Many of the 1898 year group for example, featured in a book of caricatures produced by student Logic Whiteway entitled *The Slade Animal Land, as seen by the Lo with help in ideas from the Jeff and other friendly animals, February & March 1898*.⁴⁶⁵ The sketched caricature drawings depicted students and tutors as amusing animal characters; Gwen John was 'The Gwengion', Henry Tonks, 'The Tonk', Augustus John 'The Beardgion, and Maggie Beale 'The Beal', a comical figure resembling a long-necked type of bird (Fig. 120).⁴⁶⁶ Maggie Beale was clearly popular with the group of 'fashionable' and talented students, some of whom went on to become celebrated artists. Her Slade friends would undoubtedly have inspired Maggie's artistic sensibilities. One close friend in particular, Edith M. Lister (1859-1950) was remembered by Muriel Arber (a Lister family friend) as 'delicate' [...] 'her artist talent was so highly developed that painting became her main occupation'.⁴⁶⁷ Edith Lister was Maggie's life-long friend and a regular visitor to Standen; as Maggie's niece Phyllis Wager later remembered, she 'was very frequently here, she was older than Aunt Mag and very much her guide in her painting and artistry'.⁴⁶⁸ In April of 1902 Edith Lister travelled with Maggie to Florence where they sketched historical buildings and gardens, such as the *Boboli Gardens 10 April 02* (Fig. 121). Later, Edith became a member of the Walpole Society, a London-based society of learned elites founded in 1911 to promote the study of British art.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁴ University College, London Slade School of Fine Arts, *The Slade, 1871-1971: A Centenary Exhibition, the Royal Academy of Arts, Diploma Galleries, 20 Nov. to 12 Dec.* (Slade School of Fine Arts, 1971), 7.

⁴⁶⁵ Logic Whiteway, 'Caricature Portraits of Augustus John, Gwen John and Their Fellow Students at the Slade, "The Slade Animal Land".', 1898, UCL CA/55/3c(ib), SSFA.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Muriel A Arber, *Lyme Landscape with Figures* (Exeter: Devon Books, 1988), 37.

⁴⁶⁸ Mrs Phyllis Wager, *Memory of Standen - Transcript*, September 1999, 14, SOSTSO 3A, NTSR.

⁴⁶⁹ Walpole Society (Great Britain), *The Second Annual Volume of the Walpole Society 1912-1913* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), List of Members.

Another pre-requisite for professional, late-nineteenth century artists was a period of training at one of the French ateliers. In 1897, Maggie went to Paris with her cousin Edith M. Beale (1870-1961), the daughter of her uncle Charles Gabriel Beale and his wife Alice, née Kenrick. They travelled with other relatives over Easter and were photographed during the trip by Paris photographer J. Lauga (Fig. 122). Maggie's sketch book contains a pictorial travel diary of the trip which appears to have included some art classes. Several of Maggie's sketches feature women painting at their easels, such as the one she drew at the end of April 1897 (Fig. 123). Although it is not known which salon she attended, it is significant that their Paris trip coincided with women being accepted into the *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts* for the first time.⁴⁷⁰ Furthermore, their visit corresponded with the opening of *L'Exposition des portraits des femmes et d'enfants* on the 30 April 1897 which they attended in early May. This Beaux-Arts exhibition featured portraits of women and children mostly produced by male artists, an irony perhaps alluded to by Maggie in her sketch entitled *Portraits de Femmes Beaux Arts May 7th* which depicts a male figure closely resembling the artist Carolus-Duran (1837-1917), one of the exhibition patrons (Fig. 124).

The experience of painting and sketching in Paris would have boosted Maggie's artistic credibility back home, especially amongst her fellow students at the Slade. Many artists associated with the Slade community had received training in France, such as J. M. Whistler, the hugely influential artist who would have aroused much interest when he visited a Life Class at the Slade in 1896.⁴⁷¹ It is not clear whether this coincided with Maggie's first term that same year, but being a fresher she was likely to have been downstairs in the Antique Room, concentrating on her drawing. Nevertheless, his influence would have been felt throughout the school, and students such as Gwen John who later studied at his Académie Carmen in France in 1898-99 would have been inspired by his formidable reputation.⁴⁷² The composition of a photograph of Maggie posing before the fireplace at 32 Holland Park in 1898, dressed as a bridesmaid for her

⁴⁷⁰ Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women's Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Yale University Press, 1994), 103.

⁴⁷¹ Chitty, *Gwen John*, 38.

⁴⁷² Foster, 'Gwen John's Self-Portrait: Art, Identity and Women Students at the Slade School', 175.

cousin, Edith M. Beale's wedding (Fig. 125), could easily have been modelled on Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl* of 1864 (Fig. 126). Whistler had studied in Paris as a young man and since the mid-1860s he had been inspired by Japanese art and became known for using Oriental accessories in his paintings such as *The Lange Lijzen of the Six Marks*, 1864.⁴⁷³ Whistler was one of the personalities responsible for the development of Japonisme, a craze for Japanese goods which spurred a taste for the oriental amongst affluent middle-classes, influencing everything from decorative interiors to ceramics and furniture.⁴⁷⁴ By the late nineteenth century the purchase of Oriental furnishings and objects was associated with avant-garde tastes and aesthetic living.⁴⁷⁵ It was a way that consumers could create a meaningful aesthetic experience in their own homes, one only previously enjoyed on visits to an art gallery or museum.⁴⁷⁶ Most likely encouraged by Maggie, since she loved to immerse herself in the Oriental splendour of India and Japan, the Beales embraced the fashionable craze. They purchased Japanese artefacts to decorate their town and country homes: a Japanese cabinet from a London supplier for the Drawing Room at Holland Park and later, for Standen, prints, ceramics, ivories, and textiles from Japan during their world tour of 1906-7, a subject examined in more detail in Chapter Four.

Maggie's passion for Oriental colour and design inspired some of the decorative choices she made for her first bedroom at Standen, shown marked on Philip Webb's 1892 plan as Bedroom No.1 on the First Floor (Fig. 127). It is a south-facing room, designed as the Dressing Room to Bedroom No. 2, the bedroom allocated to her older sister Amy. The room was originally hung with a textile,⁴⁷⁷ before being wallpapered with *Larkspur* by Morris & Co. in 1906.⁴⁷⁸ It was probably fixed in a similar fashion to those in the Morning Room made in

⁴⁷³ John Sandberg, '“Japonisme” and Whistler', *The Burlington Magazine* 106, no. 740 (1 November 1964): 503.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 500.

⁴⁷⁵ Christine M E Guth, 'Japonisme', in *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900*, ed. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr (London: V&A Publishing, 2011), 110.

⁴⁷⁶ Kramer, 'From Specimen to Scrap: Japanese Textiles in the British Victorian Interior, 1875-1900', 130.

⁴⁷⁷ Hooks for a frieze rail were removed when the room was redecorated with *Larkspur* wallpaper by Morris & Co. in 1906 see Morris & Co., 'To J S Beale Esq., Estimate from Morris & Company', 20 October 1906, MS 377 (14), WSRO.

⁴⁷⁸ Oliver Garnett, *Standen, West Sussex*. (London: National Trust, 1993), 62.

Daffodil fabric, which suggests that Maggie's artistic influence probably extended throughout the house. Choosing green stained floor boards and a red coloured Ghiordes Carpet from G.P. & J Baker, she favoured bright and contrasting colours for her room. Moreover, she would have been aware that a Ghiordes prayer rug from Turkey was a highly- valued possession amongst the artist community. French artist, James Tissot, for example, pictures a brightly coloured Oriental rug in *Young women looking at Japanese articles*, a painting of 1869 set in his Paris home (Fig. 128). Artist and writer Christiana Herringham⁴⁷⁹ explained in an article written in 1908 for *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* that ownership of such a valued carpet distinguished those possessing an innate sense of beauty:

These rugs are highly prized by collectors, who instinctively feel their beauty, for flair constantly precedes and guides the formal or technical recognition of the 'expert' critic.⁴⁸⁰

As the artist of the family, it was widely accepted that Maggie Beale had acquired the necessary 'flair' and instinct to judge beauty, especially when it came to making decisions about interior decoration, furnishings and even dress fashion. Not only was she involved in decorating decisions at Standen, but her siblings also turned to her for advice when it came to decorating their own homes. A few weeks before her younger brother Samuel married Sylvia Bell in April 1908, a shopping trip to Morris & Co. was organised with his sister to choose wallpaper for his new marital home. Although illness had prevented Maggie from going, the youngest sister Helen consulted Maggie by letter:

Sam and I went to Morris' in the morning he is determined to put a paper onto his staircase, he thinks the expanse is too vast for distemper; where the present marble affair is he means to put varnished green paint, then a beading, and then I think the "anemone" machine printed paper. Do you know the one? – [...].⁴⁸¹

Maggie Beale's keen interest in interior decoration and furnishings is featured in some of her sketches contained in a collection of her sketch books dating from 1897 to 1936. These are mostly pencil sketches of her family in their every-day

⁴⁷⁹ She was also a founding Director of Ladies' Residential Chambers with Agnes Garrett.

⁴⁸⁰ One of a series of articles on Oriental Carpets by Christiana J. Herringham, 'Notes on Oriental Carpet Patterns-III. Ghiordes Rugs, Rose and Pomegranate Patterns', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 14, no. 69 (1 December 1908): 147–58.

⁴⁸¹ Helen Beale, 'Dearest Magsey', 31 March 1908, 4, P1030276, BFP.

domestic environment, demonstrating that she paid as much attention to furnishing details as she did to the person she was drawing. In a sketch of a woman sewing for example, the contours of the chair are conscientiously illustrated with other furniture sketched in the background (Fig. 129). Another sketch of a woman seated in the Drawing Room not only captures her assured pose, but the attention given to the form of the armchair reinforces the sitter's lofty attitude (Fig. 130). The drawings that Maggie Beale produced were more than just a simple record of family life or travel experiences. When she sketched figures, she invariably sought to portray a certain harmony between people and everyday objects, a sign that she viewed life with the gaze of an artist. Her views about painting and artists were outlined in a handwritten essay entitled 'About Pictures of Children', possibly written in preparation for a talk or a lecture. It was written sometime after she had visited the Gallery Ospedale degli Innocenti whilst holidaying in Florence where she saw the Andrea della Robbia glazed terra-cotta reliefs of swaddled babies. She believed that artists were especially perceptive and communicated how they saw the world through their pictures:

So pictures are a kind of book for us to read. An artist is a person who has a specially sensitive eye for what things look like. He sees further into things than you as he feels more intensely the beauty of what he sees.⁴⁸²

Thus at Standen, the Beale family turned to Maggie for her artistic flair and advice on matters of taste because she was respected as a trained artist and could see things with an artistic eye. Even though she only ever remained an amateur artist, her social circle was impressive and her contribution to the appreciation of beauty in the styling of Standen's interiors was extensive.

⁴⁸² Maggie Beale, 'About Pictures of Children', c 1902, 1, BFP.

Part Four: Styling Standen

“No house in London could ever be invested with the passionate delight he had in our dear riverside home, the home of his dreams, with its poet’s garden.”⁴⁸³

In describing what Kelmscott Manor meant to her father, May Morris’s words illustrate how a home can be a material representation of human imagination and creativity. While the Beales’ London home was considered to be a necessity, a country home set in a rural idyll was an aspiration. The idea that Standen, their country retreat was initially intended to be used for holidays and not as the main family residence until James Beale retired, somehow conceals the amount of careful consideration and energy that the Beales invested in the project. From the outset, James and Margaret Beale viewed the creation of Standen not simply as a holiday home but as an imaginative, life-long venture which encompassed the house, garden and wider estate. It not only afforded them the space to be creative but it was the ultimate way of demonstrating a cultural and social affiliation to an ‘artistic’, elite middle-class who perceived their house as a statement of identity and a work of art. They were part of a London social circle which included established networks of artists and their patrons, who viewed a beautiful house as a testament of its owner’s refined artistic taste.

As Standen’s newly created living space began to take shape, the Beales were keen to choose decorations and furnishings for their new house in the country. As organiser and manager of the home Margaret Beale was a prolific note-maker, lists relating to Standen, such as, ‘To be bought’ and ‘Still to be done’ were written in March 1894.⁴⁸⁴ Although she had been purchasing furnishings and household goods since early January that year, there was still much to be done to prepare the new house for the family’s forthcoming ‘holiday’. To help her organise the new living space, Margaret Beale diligently kept a hard-backed notebook called *Holly Bush Furnishing Book*, in which she entered items of furniture, carpets and household sundries as they were acquired for each room.

⁴⁸³ William Morris, *Collected Works William Morris with Introductions by His Daughter May Morris 1910-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Vol. VIII: xvi.

⁴⁸⁴ Margaret Beale, “‘Still to Be Done March 9th” - Handwritten Note’, 1894, MS 47, WSRO.

It followed a 'walk-round' route through the house, starting with the Hall, naming each room to coincide with the number of the rooms on Webb's floor plans.

Holly Bush Furnishing Book is summarised in Appendix C using a table format detailing a room-by-room list of furniture and accessories cross referenced with extant Bills of Sale.⁴⁸⁵

Over the next few years, the Beales decorated and furnished Standen with a diverse combination of artistic styles that would have been influenced by the eclecticism of the artists' houses that surrounded their London home in Holland Park. The interior they created for Standen consisted of a variety of decorative styles and furnishings which not only embodied Arts and Crafts but also encompassed Aestheticism; both layered with antiques, *objets d'art* and treasured family possessions. Charlotte Gere's recent examination of the contents of artists' houses offers a re-assessment of Aestheticism. She argues that whilst traditional perceptions of Aestheticism in relation to artistic interiors were focused on blue and white china ('chinamania') and goods from Japan, they actually included objects of the so-called revived Renaissance, such as wall tapestries and carved wooden furniture.⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, an assorted mix of antique and exotic objects characteristically found in London artist houses and studios inspired educated, middle-class professionals like the Beales, who appreciated art. The interiors they created at Standen were not purely confined to the Arts and Crafts; they were varied and multi-layered, governed by 'taste' and more often than not, saturated with personal meaning.⁴⁸⁷

4.1 Questioning 'Arts and Crafts'

'Arts and Crafts' is a term that has become synonymous with modern accounts of Standen, not only used to describe its architecture, but also its architect and its interiors. For example, 'Arts and Crafts family home with Morris & Co. interiors, set in a beautiful hillside garden',⁴⁸⁸ is offered as a 'strap-line' for the

⁴⁸⁵ Archived in collections at WSRO and NTS.

⁴⁸⁶ Gere, *Artistic Circles*, 9.

⁴⁸⁷ For a similar argument about Arts and Crafts and Aestheticism see Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart, *Rethinking the Interior, c.1867-1896: Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts* (Ashgate Publishing, 2010).

⁴⁸⁸ 'Standen House and Garden - Visitor Information - National Trust', accessed 26 January 2015, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/standen-house-and-garden/>.

current description of Standen on its official web-site. Yet the extent to which it was originally a purely Arts and Crafts interior was an idea largely constructed in the 1970s. In 2004, architectural historian Aileen Reid, argued that Standen's interior was 'subjected to a process of 'purification'' asserting, that when the National Trust took over in 1972, rejected family furniture was replaced with selected Morris & Co. items.⁴⁸⁹ Furthermore, the term 'Arts and Crafts family home' is a generic description which uses the label 'Arts and Crafts' to categorise the house, yet when its meaning is scrutinised further, it becomes clear that 'Arts and Crafts' is a slippery concept. As Imogen Hart has argued in her study *Arts and Crafts Objects*, it is difficult to ascertain what the varied applications of 'Arts and Crafts' have in common as the term cannot be definitively anchored to a stylistic pattern.⁴⁹⁰ Her interpretation of 'Arts and Crafts' as being a term used to indicate that a design or an object is associated with certain principles provides a useful lens through which to view 'the Arts and Crafts' element of Standen's interior. Many of the core 'Arts and Crafts' ideas she identifies challenged contemporary trends, such as mass-produced, machine decorated goods; a disregard of natural materials; slavish copying of past styles; and lastly, the practice of classifying some arts as superior to others. Therefore, 'Arts and Crafts' was associated with a set of ideas that sought artistic and social reform. Understood in this way, when referring to Standen as an 'Arts and Crafts family home', it would imply that 'Arts and Crafts' were not only manifested physically, but they also underpinned its function as a family home, in other words, within the lived experience of the Beale family. With Hart's approach in mind, this section illustrates how 'Arts and Crafts', as a set of ideas that questioned the consequences of the industrial age, was represented in the decoration, furnishings and objects of Standen's artistic interior.

The designs and products of Morris & Co., an integral part of late-nineteenth century Arts and Crafts, laid the foundations for Margaret Beale's decorative scheme at Standen. In the spring of 1894, the Beales organised a

⁴⁸⁹ Aileen Reid, '7 Hammersmith Terrace London: The Last Arts and Crafts Interior', *The Decorative Arts Society 1850 to the Present* 28 (2004): 201.

⁴⁹⁰ Imogen Hart, *Arts and Crafts Objects*, Studies in Design (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 8.

representative from Morris's to call at Standen to provide an estimate for blinds, carpets, floor coverings and curtain poles.⁴⁹¹ By the time these were fitted at the end of May, another list of textiles and wallpaper subsequently chosen from Morris's extensive range had also been added to the final bill. The Beales' choices were undoubtedly encouraged by Webb's connection to Morris & Co. and influenced by the 'artistic' homes and studios accessible to their London social network. Besides the Ionides family of Holland Park, already mentioned in Part Two, others belonging to the Beales' circle of friends and family had selected Morris & Co. products. For example, their dentist friend, Charles Tones had decorated the operating room of the dental surgery adjacent to his home in '*Fruit No. 5* – light ground'.⁴⁹² This design was very popular among owners with 'advanced' artistic ideas, such as Linley and Marion Sambourne at Stafford Terrace who chose it for their Dining Room in the late 1870s.⁴⁹³ By the time the Beales selected *Fruit* wallpaper for Standen's Billiard Room alcove in 1898, the name of Morris & Co. had become synonymous with the concept of good taste. A case study examining the working methods and products of William Morris by scholars Charles Harvey, Jon Press and Mairi Maclean has identified that a 'Morrisian community of taste' existed among families like the Beales who were rich in economic, social and cultural capital.⁴⁹⁴ One of their key findings is that Morris & Co. products were valued amongst the middle-classes not because of a desire to emulate the upper-classes but because of shared aesthetic preferences. This was fuelled by a fascination for Romanticism, medievalism, and the world of nature.⁴⁹⁵ As the following analysis of Standen's Hall illustrates, when the Beales chose to decorate with Morris & Co. products, they were associating their 'artistic' taste with reformist, Arts and Crafts beliefs, one that was underpinned by a nostalgic interest in the medieval age and the myth of 'Ye Olde England'.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹¹ Morris & Co., "To J S Beale Esq, Estimate," April 30, 1894, MS 289, WSRO.

⁴⁹² Executed during works completed by Webb at 37 Cavendish Square and 14a Princes Street in September of 1889, their London home and dental surgery, in Philip Webb, 'Site Notebook 1880s -Sept 20 1889, 37 Cavendish Square', SPAB.

⁴⁹³ Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 24.

⁴⁹⁴ Charles Harvey, Jon Press, and Mairi Maclean, "William Morris, Cultural Leadership, and the Dynamics of Taste," *Business History Review* 85, no. 02 (June 28, 2011): 259.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁴⁹⁶ For further information on William Morris and medievalism see Jennifer Harris, 'William Morris and the Middle Ages', in *William Morris and the Middle Ages: A Collection of Essays*,

Breaking with convention, the Hall at Standen was designed to be used as a reception room where guests could be entertained and family gatherings could take place (Fig. 131). It was different to the Hall at the Beales' Holland Park home, which had a traditional, long passageway similar to that featured in a 1908-9 photograph of their neighbour's house at No. 28 (Fig. 132). At Standen, the Hall is on the right as you enter the house from the front Porch. It is an example of a 'living hall', an Arts and Crafts invention based on the idea of the medieval hall as a centralised social space.⁴⁹⁷ Many of the styles framing this theme are indebted to historical precedents, exemplified by the painted panelling lining many of the walls. Webb's interest in such design features would have been shared by the Beales whose fascination with English history and architecture was not new. A family album featuring holidays from the 1870s and 80s contains some photographs which illustrate their interest in historic architecture. They document features such as a heraldic chimney-piece in Plas Mawr, an ancient Elizabethan house in Conwy, North Wales (Fig. 133) and the seventeenth century oak panelled Long Gallery (Fig. 134) and oak carved staircase (Fig. 135) at Aston Hall in Birmingham. Given their long-standing interest in historic architectural features, it is understandable that the Beales would wish to reference this in some way at Standen. Webb's designs provided the answer; borrowing elements from past prototypes, his stylistic interpretations were both modern and unpretentious.

At Standen, the chimney-piece designed by Webb for the Hall is a central feature; it has simple clean lines and is similar to his design for the one in the Library at Great Tangle Manor (Fig. 136).⁴⁹⁸ It demonstrates a modern rendition of a style that clearly referenced past architectural elements, such as classical eighteenth-century timber doorcase design (Fig. 137).⁴⁹⁹ Initially, the wall panelling and chimney piece were painted red; an example of the paint colour to be used was taken from a wallpaper pattern called 'Mallow' No.170,

Together with a Catalogue of Works Exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery, 28 September-8 December 1984, ed. Joanna Banham (Manchester University Press, 1984), 1-16 (2).

⁴⁹⁷ Hitchmough, *Arts and Crafts Lifestyle and Design*, 45.

⁴⁹⁸ Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 189.

⁴⁹⁹ One example is the doorcase inserted by Henry Fryer in 1722 in the Hall at Owlpen Manor, Gloucestershire: see 'Owlpen Manor - The Interior', *Owlpen Manor Estate*, accessed 24 June 2014. www.owlpen.com/content/interior.

sold by Morris & Co. (Fig. 138).⁵⁰⁰ Red was also a favourite amongst the Kensington artistic community; Leighton had used dark red for his studio walls at 1 Holland Park Road⁵⁰¹ and Marcus Stone painted the dining room walls of his studio at 8 Melbury Road salmon red.⁵⁰² The ox-blood version had long been associated with William Morris and Red House, having been used for the distinctive, Webb- designed sideboard in the Red House dining room.⁵⁰³

The Hall at Standen was used by the Beales for family gatherings, musical evenings and to receive guests for tea. In accordance with most middle-class homes and family tradition, a piano was an essential piece of furniture in the Beale household. There had been one in the Drawing Room at Blackdown, Margaret Beale's childhood home and also at Gordon Square and Holland Park. Whilst seeking to find a model that would blend in with their medieval decorative theme at Standen, they were aware of space constraints and selected an instrument that would not need as much space as a full-size grand piano. They settled on an 'Upright Grand Pianoforte in an oak case with a special medieval English design' from C. Bechstein of Wigmore Street, purchased in May of 1894 to blend in with their 'Arts and Crafts' decorative theme. It is possible that they had previously seen a prototype of this instrument exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1893, as illustrated in *The Studio* magazine of 1893 (Fig. 139).⁵⁰⁴ It was designed with a plain oak case by Arts and Crafts architect and designer Walter Cave (1863 -1939) and produced commercially by Bechstein as the 'Medieval English Upright Grand'.⁵⁰⁵ When the Hall was later enlarged, the Beales ordered a Broadwood Grand Piano No.4, 'Drawing Room' model. Its presence was appreciated by all generations of the Beale family, as Barton Worthington, Amy Beale's son, remembered vividly on a visit to Standen in 1999; the piano 'was used a lot for playing music [...]. Well my mother played the piano, and three sisters, one of them played the fiddle [...].'⁵⁰⁶ Music was a popular family pastime with all generations of the Beale family, as a photograph

⁵⁰⁰ Philip Webb, 'Notebook for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1896 (photocopy)' - 25 August 1894, STA09/File 3, NTSR.

⁵⁰¹ Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle*, 62.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 166.

⁵⁰³ Jan Marsh, *William Morris & Red House* (National Trust Books, 2005), 43.

⁵⁰⁴ 'The Arts and Crafts Exhibition 1893', *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*, 1893, 18.

⁵⁰⁵ David Wainwright, *The Piano Makers* (Hutchinson, 1975), 117.

⁵⁰⁶ Worthington, Transcript of 'A record of the memories of Standen', 3.

of the Beales' third daughter Dorothy (1877- 1969) standing in the Hall with a violin, illustrates (Fig. 140). A return to the use of the Hall as an important social space was a relatively new phenomenon, as Muthesius pointed out in 1904, the 'Hall reinstated originally largely out of romantic enthusiasm, is now in the process of acquiring a real importance'.⁵⁰⁷ This was partly because the room was perceived as gender-neutral territory in the late-nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁸ The Beales' attitude towards the use of the Hall as an extra living space not only signalled their pragmatism but also their progressive attitude and flexibility when it came to transforming convention and adopting new trends.

At Standen, the Hall was thus perceived as an essential social space, used regularly to entertain family and friends. It must have been a great success for it soon became clear that it was not spacious enough and Webb was asked to suggest a solution for its enlargement in January of 1898. In a letter replying to their request, he agreed that more space was needed, remarking that he had seen one of their tea-time socials where eleven people gathered in the room.⁵⁰⁹ The problem could be solved, he suggested, by adding a bay window extension which could accommodate a piano and allow more space in the main section of the room.⁵¹⁰ He designed the bay extension with a canted stone mullion and transom window which was not only functional, providing support for the roof,⁵¹¹ but it also enhanced the medieval character of the room. Another advantage, pointed out by Webb in his letter, was that 'this plan would allow the least obstruction to the light'. It was an issue that clearly concerned the Beales as they decided to brighten the space by changing the walls in the Hall from red to white in March of 1901.⁵¹²

With Arts and Crafts principles guiding the Beales' artistic taste for their 'medieval' themed Hall, they furnished it with hand-crafted furniture. A table and three armchairs were given as a gift to Standen by Margaret Beale's father Algernon Sydney Field (1813 - 1907). They were made of oak by Thomas

⁵⁰⁷ Muthesius and Seligman, *The English House* (1904), II:51.

⁵⁰⁸ Walker, 'Home Making', 826.

⁵⁰⁹ Philip Webb, 'To James S Beale Esq, Letter Regarding Hall and Billiard Room Alterations', 20 January 1898, MS 176, WSRO.

⁵¹⁰ Philip Webb, 'To J S Beale Esq', 20 January 1898, 2, WSRO.

⁵¹¹ 'and the support of the roofing is carried by the stone mullions of the window itself' see Ibid.3.

⁵¹² Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1901.

Henry Kendall (1837 -1919) of Warwick.⁵¹³ He was a designer and master wood carver of some repute; he had exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition and been awarded two medals for excellent craftsmanship. A photograph taken for *Country Life* in 1970 depicts one of the chairs, with its cane seat and back, and a glimpse of an intricately carved table leg (Fig. 141). Another photograph illustrating the chair in more detail is of governess, Kitty Kislingbury, taken when the colour of the Hall panelling was still red (Fig. 142). It is significant that this style of carved oak chair could be found within the homes of the London artistic fraternity. For instance, a similar model is depicted in the home of eminent artist Alma-Tadema in a painting by his daughter Anna entitled *Interior of the Gold Room, Townshend House, London*, c.1883 (Fig. 143). For artists and devotees of the Arts and Crafts Movement, hand-crafted furniture in the home was perceived as a material representation of their core values. Artist and bookbinder, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson (1840 -1922) outlined his views on the subject in an address to the 1896 Arts and Crafts Exhibition:

The point I wish to emphasise in this beautiful scene is the fact that the furniture, which supplements the human being, has a human and individual origin. It is made by the well-known, presented to and by the well-known and it is handed on from generation to generation, with so to speak, its own genealogy of tradition. It is thus worthy of the skill and of the genius of the Craftsman and of the Artist. Such furniture is made to play a dignified part in life; [...] ⁵¹⁴

When furnishing Standen, the Beales were clearly inspired by Arts and Crafts ideals, expressed by key supporters like Cobden-Sanderson. Two other items made by Kendall, an oak chest (Fig. 144) and an oak seat (Fig. 145), initially for the Porch, were commissioned by the Beales in 1894 from prototypes found at the Earl of Leycester's Hospital in Warwick. The design for the oak chest was adapted from that of an Elizabethan chest or settle to form a bench seat by adding a back-rest and arms.⁵¹⁵ The design for the seat, made of pickled old oak was modelled on an ancient Saxon chair. Inspired by past styles, these pieces of furniture complemented the historic characteristics of the front entrance Porch. Not only was the stone entrance bay built 'in the tradition of

⁵¹³ Beale, 'Personal Notebook - Family Things', 3.

⁵¹⁴ T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, *Art and Life, and the Building and Decoration of Cities: A Series of Lectures by Members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, Delivered at the Fifth Exhibition of the Society in 1896* (London: Rivington Percival & Co, 1897), 9–10.

⁵¹⁵ Thomas Henry Kendall, 'Invoice to James S Beale Esq.', November 1894, MS 337, WSRO.

those found in the large, red brick Elizabethan and Jacobean houses', ⁵¹⁶ but the theme also continues inside with oak panelled walls and the exposed beams of a barrel ceiling (Fig. 146). In the centre of the house, the main Staircase in oak was also inspired by past precedents (Fig. 147); the balusters and flat handrail designed by Webb pay homage to a pared-down, stylised version of seventeenth century staircase design. It was perhaps inspired by those similar to the one admired by the Beales at Aston Hall in Birmingham. The Staircase and Staircase Hall is united decoratively by its white painted wall panelling, a feature which runs throughout the house. Above the panelling, Morris & Co. wallpaper, *Bachelors Button* No.298, harmonises with the rich tones of the woodwork. ⁵¹⁷ Connecting key social and public spaces at Standen, the Staircase and Inner Hall was not only a principal site of display for objects associated with an 'old English style' but also with those which expressed family identity and ancestry. Important family portraits were hung at the base of the stairs, a theme returned to later in this section, and two large seventeenth-century tapestries displayed at the half-landing, as illustrated in a photograph of 1973 (Fig. 148). ⁵¹⁸

Thus at Standen, the Hall was a functional, flexible, family living space which also acted as a main reception room for receiving guests. Together with the Porch, Inner Hall and Staircase, the Beales would have planned these rooms to convey the right impression, without appearing ostentatious. The 'Old English' style with crafted reproduction furniture by Kendall and the rich tapestries would have signified how the Beales' artistic and cultured taste was underpinned by Arts and Crafts ideals, which shunned machine-made objects in favour of high-quality craftsmanship. Furthermore, by imitating and adapting historical designs, they were not simply appropriating an art and culture traditionally connected with a romantic idea of past history; they were actively refashioning a version of tradition to establish a contemporary style of their own.

⁵¹⁶ Kirk, *Philip Webb*, 154.

⁵¹⁷ Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894', 25 August 1894.

⁵¹⁸ These tapestries were not required by the National Trust in the 1970s; seen from the foot of the stairs or the half-landing, they appear to depict scenes from ancient Roman history to complement the styling of the Hall.

The Billiard Room, on the other hand, is a space in which the Beales' 'contemporary style' is reconfigured to achieve a light, modern and carefully ordered social space (Fig. 149). The way in which they decorated and furnished the room reflected an overall shift in late-nineteenth century social attitudes to spaces traditionally perceived as masculine. As this case study reveals, at Standen, the Billiard Room space was functional and comfortable, but no longer overtly masculine. The interior décor chosen by the Beales would have seemed relatively bright and fresh, quite different to some of the traditionally styled Billiard Rooms in the homes of their Kensington neighbours. For example, at Moray Lodge, home of silk merchant and amateur artist Arthur J. Lewis, an 1893 photograph of the Billiard Room by Adolphe A. Boucher for Bedford Lemere illustrates its masculine character with dark coloured paintwork and furniture (Fig. 150). Decorated with hunting trophies, it was a sombre, masculine space compared with Standen where paler coloured woods and paintwork were being liberally employed. From the start, Morris & Co. wallpapers and textiles were used at Standen to create a bright and airy effect; the wallpaper was *Pomegranate* (also known as *Fruit*) seen illustrated in a family photograph of Helen and Samuel Beale playing billiards c.1895 (Fig. 151). A simple pattern, it was possibly chosen for its neutrality, wide appeal and association with healthy living and fertility, a quality emphasised through the symbol of the pomegranate (Fig. 152). In 1898 when the new lobby area of the room was added, it was wallpapered with the same pattern,⁵¹⁹ and the white painted panelling on the lower half of the wall was added in January 1899.⁵²⁰

The Billiard Room at Standen is a good example of a light and reserved Arts and Crafts interior, an essential Arts and Crafts concept emanating from a desire for healthy living, encouraged by harmonising architectural and decorative design. As floor space was constricted by the size of the Billiard table, it made sense for Webb to incorporate built-in furniture to maximise the space. As Webb's plans illustrate, seating for spectators was integrated into his design for the room (Fig. 153). He allowed for a stepped recess which was to accommodate a built-in seat of 'wainscot oak', later replaced by a bespoke,

⁵¹⁹ Garnett, *Standen, West Sussex.*, 53.

⁵²⁰ Beale, 'Garden Diary, 1890-1932', 1899.

large leather-covered settee. A leather-topped, oak writing desk was also designed especially to fit into the recess of the North West corner of the room (Fig. 154). Besides its practical advantages, bespoke built-in furniture was associated with health and cleanliness.⁵²¹ As early as 1881, architect Robert Edis had championed the idea that fitted furniture promoted health through cleanliness. He explained the concept in his book *Decoration and Furniture of Town Houses*:

I wish particularly to advocate the greater use of plain fitted and designed furniture for recesses in various rooms, as they can be made at much less cost than the usual moveable furniture, can be adapted to the general character of the rooms, and if made as I shall hereafter describe will save much labour in dusting and cleaning, and will not form resting-places for the dirt and filth that accumulate, [...].⁵²²

Built-in furniture was a new innovation endorsed by high-class furniture suppliers such as Collinson & Lock of Oxford Street.⁵²³ A vendor utilised by the Beales for bedroom furniture in 1896, they promoted their novel range of 'fitments' in the classified section of *The Times* of May 1891 as being: 'Recognised as the most healthy, suitable most pleasing method of fitting bed and bathrooms, bachelors chambers, shooting boxes etc., [...].'⁵²⁴

At Standen, the Billiard Room was light, airy and 'healthy'; it was styled as an Arts and Crafts interior which reflected a shift in conventional customs governing the way that the room was used. Its traditionally gendered boundaries were now mutable, as one commentator noted in an 1892 edition of women's magazine *Hearth and Home*:

Our grandmothers would have shuddered with horror at the bare idea of their daughters even entering a billiard-room; but the girls of today not only enter, but handle the cue as skilfully as their brothers [...].⁵²⁵

Gendered conventions associated with women playing billiards had relaxed as renowned billiard table suppliers Burroughes and Watts acknowledged in one of

⁵²¹ Robert W. (Robert William) Edis, *Decoration & Furniture of Town Houses; a Series of Cantor Lectures Delivered before the Society of Arts, 1880, Amplified and Enl.* (New York, Scribner and Welford, 1881).

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵²³ Clive Edwards, "'Art Furniture in the Old English Style' The Firm of Collinson and Lock, London, 1870–1900," *West 86th* 19, no. 2 (September 1, 2012): 270.

⁵²⁴ 'Celebrated Furniture by Collinson and Lock', *The Times*, 8 May 1891, 12.

⁵²⁵ Lady Di, 'The World of Sportswomen', *Hearth and Home* (London), 14 September 1893, 596.

their advertisements. Appealing directly to progressive, middle-class women, it featured well-dressed ladies playing billiards (Fig. 155). As the photograph of their youngest daughter Helen Beale playing billiards with her brother Sam illustrates, the Beales were undoubtedly relaxed about their daughters' participation in a sport conventionally associated with men. As an accomplished player, it was 'Aunt Helen' who later taught her nieces and nephews how to play on the billiard table at Standen.⁵²⁶

Billiard Rooms were no longer strictly a masculine preserve; the shift in attitude was also reflected by furniture and equipment designers. For example, certain suppliers designed bespoke, dual-purpose furniture to appeal to women who socialised in the Billiard Room. New designs for the "Model Billiard-Room" were reviewed in an article entitled 'Billiards' which appeared in the *Country Gentleman Sporting Gazette* of September 1890. An 'elegant ladies writing table' could be easily turned into a score board for pool or billiards or into a 'pretty work basket so that in the intervals of scoring the fair one can occupy herself with some *passementerie* or other work'.⁵²⁷ The Beale family women were undoubtedly watching and playing billiards at Standen, for within two years of the house being finished they wanted to make more room for seating spectators. In 1898, Webb was asked by the Beales to make 'the Billiard Room more accessible for 'lookers on' at the game'.⁵²⁸ His solution was to utilise some of the adjoining hallway space to make an alcove opening in the south wall. This meant moving the chimneypiece from the south east corner to the east wall where it is seen today.⁵²⁹

Depending on the occasion, the Billiard Room at Standen was a fluid social space, not only as a place for men to congregate but it was also frequented by younger family members for entertainment and recreation. It also served as a family library, a bookcase having been later added by Webb's assistant George Jack in 1907. The Billiard Room was an ideal place to occupy children on wet

⁵²⁶ Worthington, Transcript of 'A record of the memories of Standen', 5.

⁵²⁷ *Passementerie* is a decorative trimming of gimp, braid, cord and beads etc. in 'Billiards', *The County Gentleman Sporting Gazette, Agricultural Journal, and The Man about Town*, 20 September 1890, 1223.

⁵²⁸ Webb, 'To James S Beale Esq, Letter Regarding Hall and Billiard Room Alterations', 1.

⁵²⁹ The alterations were carried out in 1898 by Mr Rice a local contractor, at the same time as the extension to the Hall.

days when grandchildren came to visit during school holidays in the early years of the twentieth century. One of Maggie Beale's letters to her younger sister Helen describes an occasion when their sister Dorothy and husband Harold Brown were there:

Dop [Dorothy] & co. came including Harold, and Mike & Peg have just insisted on the whole of the Joan of Arc book, & have now gone off to the billiard room with Harold, it being too beastly to go out.⁵³⁰

The continued presence of "Dobbin" the rocking horse in the Billiard Room today is a reminder of how flexible the space had become, being used as much for family recreation as a place where adults could relax and socialise. 'When the nursery was no longer available', Amy Beale's children remembered, 'Dobbin was transferred to the billiard room, and was still a favourite with succeeding generations'.⁵³¹

When family and friends visited and stayed at Standen, an formal evening dinner in the Dining Room (Fig. 156) would have been organised for groups like those depicted in an informal photograph taken in the Conservatory c.1897-8 (Fig. 157). The setting and room arrangement for such a meal was of prime importance as it would have been appraised as guests sat down to dinner. In certain circles, if presentation was in any way thought to be lacking then a family's reputation could be at stake.⁵³² At Standen, it would have been important to impress the guests with a splendid sight when they filed into the Dining Room for their evening meal. Stressing its aesthetic, sensual qualities, one of Amy Beale's children later remembered, '[...] the green walls were a soothing background to the loaded table, with its candles, flowers and silver.'⁵³³ The room was undoubtedly visually appealing, realised by a combination of Webb's architectural features with the Beales' decorative scheme. As mentioned in Part One, the plain green painted colour of the wall panelling could have been inspired by the Western Refreshment Room of the South Kensington Museum, now the V & A Museum. The 'Green Dining Room' as it became known, was created in 1866 by William Morris, Philip Webb and

⁵³⁰ Margaret S. Beale, 'To Helen Beale from MSB, Standen', March 1916, Batch 2 Letter 60, BFP.

⁵³¹ Worthington Family, "Standen Memories, Part II, 'More about the people,'" c.1990, 8, NTS.

⁵³² Rich, 49.

⁵³³ Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories - Part I One Family's Memories', c 1990, 6, NTS.

Edward Burne-Jones and regarded as a pivotal commission for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. Dubbed the 'first Aesthetic interior' by Sally-Anne Huxtable, she argues that the colour green was not just chosen for its soothing qualities, but when combined with decorative panels, it was a symbolic reference to the abundance of the fruits of the earth and the harmony of nature.⁵³⁴ As mentioned earlier, this theme was echoed in the Billiard Room through the choice of *Pomegranate* wallpaper by Morris & Co.

At Standen, such symbolic connections with the colour green would have appealed to the Beales, especially Margaret Beale, who had been an avid observer of Nature since she was a young child. She excelled in Natural History at school; at the age of twelve, her school report of September 1859 recorded that she was first in the class for this subject.⁵³⁵ She was not only interested in the natural environment, but also in nature's capacity to seamlessly harmonise with historic architecture expressed in images of ruins of ancient medieval castles. An image of *Raglan Castle* in Wales for example, was pasted into a scrap book given to Margaret Beale in 1865, aged eighteen, by her school friends (Fig. 158).⁵³⁶ Ancient ruins consumed by ivy and vegetation, effectively at one with nature, was a romantic theme that continued to inspire her throughout married life, as a Beale family photograph of seventeenth-century Brambletye House near East Grinstead illustrates (Fig. 159). The romantic portrayal of a historic building harmonising with nature is reminiscent of the manner of earlier artists such as William Westall (1781-1850), an artist who specialised in the portrayal of the picturesque landscape, as illustrated in his 1823 publication *The Landscape Album* (Fig. 160). Images such as these would have inspired the imagination of Arts and Crafts devotees like the Beales to visualise an aesthetic decorative scheme dedicated to romantic and nostalgic notions of a medieval England that balanced perfectly with nature.

Huxtable's suggestion that the Green Dining Room at South Kensington was an 'evocation of a Mythic England lost' through its portrayal of an imagined 'green

⁵³⁴ Sally-Anne Huxtable, 'Re-Reading the Green Dining Room', *Rethinking the interior*, c.1867-1896: aestheticism and arts and crafts, April 2010, 25-40, 31.

⁵³⁵ Elmsdale, Great Malvern, 'School Report, Miss Field', September 1859, CIMG0020, BFP.

⁵³⁶ Affectionate Friends, 'Scrapbook - M Field', 17 October 1863, 69, Box 36, Conservation Store, NTS.

world' could certainly be applied to other artistic interiors of the period.⁵³⁷ Kelmscott Manor for instance, in the early 1870s inspired Dante Gabriel Rossetti to associate the peace and solitude he found there with imagined ancient times:

We have got the house well filled with furniture though still rather chaotically; but the place is just such a 'haunt of ancient peace' [...].⁵³⁸ that one can hardly believe one has not always lived here [...].⁵³⁸

An atmosphere of 'ancient times', at one with nature was re-created by the Beales and Webb in the Dining Room at Standen. Characterised by simplicity, the design of the green panelled walls is reminiscent of the green over-mantel panelling by Webb for Morris's 'green room' at Kelmscott Manor (Fig. 161). With such prominent and influential examples provided by Morris and Webb, it is hardly surprising that the Beales' vision for Standen was similarly inspired by the romantic notion of a 'pastoral idyll', a key concept at the heart of the Arts and Crafts Movement. William Morris described it in 1890 in his book *News from Nowhere*, envisaging a 'utopia' located in a pastoral setting where aesthetic beauty and utility could be found side-by-side.⁵³⁹

When the Dining Room was set for evening dinner the fireplace would have been central to the room's visual impact (Fig. 162), in particular its metalware. Embossed steel fire-cheeks, artistically designed by Webb, hand-crafted by Pearson (1859–1930) and a grate, plate rack and fender by London blacksmith Thomas Elsley, would certainly have reflected the glow from the fire and accentuated the shine mirrored in the table silver. Other items of crafted metalwork individually designed by Webb were the steel fire irons, brass finger-plates and picture hooks, all adding to the overall effect (Fig. 163). However, such a bold display of pre-industrial craftsmanship did not prevent the utilisation of modern technologies like electric lighting. Additional illumination in the form of five pendant electric ceiling lights, complete with opalescent glass shades by glass-maker James Powell & Sons of Whitefriars, were installed to ensure the

⁵³⁷ Huxtable, 'Re-Reading the Green Dining Room', 34.

⁵³⁸ William E Fredeman, *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Letter to Ford Maddox Brown from Kelmscott, July 16 1871 in Falkner Peter, 'A "desertin solitude and an Eden in beauty" Rossetti at Kelmscott', *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, 18: Winter, 2008, 35–64, 36.

⁵³⁹ William Morris, *News from Nowhere*: ([Hammersmith, Kelmscott Press, sold by Reeves and Turner, London], 1893).

harshness of the 'new' artificial light was effectively subdued (Fig. 164).⁵⁴⁰ Enhancing the cosy, homely atmosphere were full-length, heavily patterned curtains made from *Peacock and Dragon* woven twill by Morris & Co. (Fig. 165). It was a design that came closest to Morris's early ideal of English medieval hangings.⁵⁴¹ Featuring two different sets of peacocks and two types of writhing dragon, its dense pattern was inspired by Middle and Far Eastern designs. Also Eastern in origin and imported especially for the British market was a carpet from Turkey purchased by the Beales from Geo. P. & J. Baker on 8 February 1894. The patterned edge of the large carpet and an oriental fire-side rug can be seen in a Beale family photograph c.1895 (Fig. 166). The carpets and the panelled walls of the Dining Room, resplendent with different shades of green, harmonised with the colourful, tapestry-effect curtains and upholstered chair seats. These textiles and colours would have accentuated and contrasted with the natural wood colour of the Webb-designed, built-in, oak shelving and sideboards in the bay section. When envisaged as a unified whole, the Beales' decorative theme evoked an impression of 'Ye Olde England', one that was romantically steeped in nature. Bringing a sense of the past into contact with the present day was perhaps a way of creating a familiar, yet timeless setting.⁵⁴²

The decorated interior of the Dining Room communicated the Beales' version of a romantic and idealised, medieval era; a space where family could identify with the past and unite it with their modern, lived experience. Family portraits on display in this room and other parts of the house also functioned in a similar way. They represented a visual connection to an individual at a particular moment in history whilst celebrating and constructing a distinguished family lineage which extended to the present. In this context, the family portrait has a timeless quality; it forms a constant bridge between a former life and its living memory. As art historian Paul Barlow has explained, an authentic portrait created by an artist who had met and painted the sitter from life meant that 'the

⁵⁴⁰ James Powell & Co, 'Bill of Sale to James S Beale Esq by Order of P Webb Architect', March 1894, MS 286, WSRO MS 286.

⁵⁴¹ Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), 64.

⁵⁴² Elizabeth Outka, *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism, and the Commodified Authentic* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

painting is the experience of that meeting'.⁵⁴³ For the Beales, a family portrait not only represented a historical record but a vital link with the lived life of past generations.

For the forefathers of the Beale and Field families (Appendix B), handing down family portraits from one generation to the next was a way of passing on family status and history. In keeping with convention, the Dining Room was the space where family ancestry was traditionally showcased. For example, the Last Will and Testament of Margaret Beale's father, Algernon Sydney Field, gave a detailed description and location of family portraits at his home at Blackdown. Hanging over the mantelpiece in the Dining Room were portraits of Oliver Cromwell and his youngest surviving son Henry Cromwell; these were displayed alongside portraits of Margaret Beale's grandfather, Reverend William Field and his grandfather John Field (1719-1796).⁵⁴⁴ Reverend William Field's portrait was a mezzotint engraving on steel by Charles Turner of 1839 as illustrated in Figure 19 after a portrait painted by Henry Wyatt which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in the summer of 1838.⁵⁴⁵ The display in the Dining Room would have resembled a gallery of portraits, leaving a visitor in no doubt that the Field family were directly connected to Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector. The family link was through the lineage of Anne Cromwell (1725-1793), wife of the London apothecary John Field (1719-1772), Margaret Beale's great-great Grandfather. Algernon Sydney Field highlighted the importance of their distinguished ancestor in the first few lines of his life's memoirs:

I will begin by recording that my Grandmother (my father's mother) was Anne Cromwell, a lineal descendant of the Protector, and one of the last who have his name.⁵⁴⁶

In Victorian homes, such displays of family portraiture were aligned with the principles which had underpinned the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery in 1856. These were poignantly explained in a speech by Lord

⁵⁴³ Paul Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present: The National Portrait Gallery and the Search for "Authentic" Portraiture', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 219-238 (228).

⁵⁴⁴ This was probably the Henry Cromwell who was born in 1628, Anne Cromwell's great-grandfather, who was Oliver Cromwell's youngest son.

⁵⁴⁵ Sylvanus Urban, 'Obituary - Rev. William Field', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1851, 550.

⁵⁴⁶ Field, *Reminiscences of Early Life*, 5.

Palmerston, given in 1859 in the House of Commons, in which he asserted that it was possible to 'realise the man by seeing his portrait':

[...] it is highly interesting and instructive, after reading about Cromwell, or any other historical character to go back to the day in which he lived and to have before you the most faithful representation in painting or sculpture that can be obtained of this person [...]. The gallery will connect itself with the history of this country.⁵⁴⁷

Understood in this way, an original portrait was capable of bridging the gap between past and present and could stimulate the imagination to enliven historical narrative. The idea that a biography and distinguished history could be accessed through authentic portraiture was an important element of the selection process at the National Portrait Gallery. As Joanna Woodall has highlighted, in the mid-nineteenth century, national portrait galleries played a part in constructing a distinct national identity through images of worthy individuals.⁵⁴⁸ A model which probably bolstered the domestic display of portraiture in private homes, particularly family portraiture which featured emblems of a sitter's professional identity; they did not just convey status and merit that could be associated with national importance but also suggested an established and prominent ancestry.

In the manner of past dining room tradition at Blackdown, where distinguished family lineage was illustrated through portraiture, the Dining Room at Standen was home to one of the Field family's cherished portraits of ancestor Oliver Cromwell. It is shown in a family photograph of the Dining Room hanging on the wall to the left of the entrance door from the Inner Hall, shown in Figure 156. Amy Beale's daughter, Phyllis Wager, remembered on a later visit to Standen that Cromwell's portrait used to hang in the Dining Room: 'We had a much bigger portrait of Oliver Cromwell in the dining room, but that actually belonged to one of the [...] it came through one of the Field family'.⁵⁴⁹ She also remembered that the portrait of Algernon Sydney Field, her great-grandfather,

⁵⁴⁷ Hansard, 3 August 1859, 887 in Paul Barlow, 'Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and the search for "authentic" portraiture', Manchester ; New York, Portraiture: facing the subject, 1997, 228.

⁵⁴⁸ Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the Subject', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 4.

⁵⁴⁹ Mrs Phyllis Wager, daughter of Amy Beale and granddaughter of James Samuel and Margaret Beale., 'Mrs Wager's memory of Standen - Transcript', 16th September 1999, 8.

always used to be in the Dining Room 'because you see he was the father of my Grandmother', implying that it was understood to be a room where important family portraits were displayed (Fig. 167). Family connections to past generations were often made by comparing a portrait's 'likeness' to its original subject or their close family relations. After researching the Field family tree in 1932, James Beale's younger brother Edwin Clifford Beale wrote to Margaret with his findings:

It interested me to note that certain familial characteristics that appear in the portrait of Henry Field (son of John and Anne C. [Cromwell]) can be traced in the picture of your Uncle Edwin and your Uncle Alfred and to some extent in Harry himself which would tend to show that they are derived from the ancestors [of] Anne Cromwell, rather than from her husband-whose engraved portrait shows none of them.⁵⁵⁰

Other important portraits on display in the Dining Room represented the ancestry of the Beale family; a portrait of *William John Beale*, James Beale's father, for example, and his Great Uncle, Joseph W. Phipson (1776-1851) were both noted by Helen Beale as being on display there.⁵⁵¹ The portrait of his uncle represented his Grandfather's generation in the line of descent. As mentioned previously, a portrait of his maternal Grandfather *William Phipson* of Westbourne had been painted by Royal Academician Thomas Phillips in 1831, but because it was later inherited by James Beale's younger brother, Charles Gabriel Beale, it was not hung at Standen.

It was largely members of the Field family, Margaret Beale's forebears, who were immortalised in a portrait; paintings and engravings of their image served as commemorative objects and were often arranged by superiors and work colleagues as an appreciation of service in their civic or professional lives. Some were displayed in respected institutions and others in family homes, for instance an engraving of Margaret Beale's great Grandfather *John Field* (1719-1796) is hung at the Royal Society of Apothecaries. In the Court Room of the Apothecaries Hall is an oil painting of his son *Henry Field* (1755- 1837) by eminent portraitist and academician H. W. Pickersgill. It was presented in recognition of his 'long and valuable services' as treasurer, another one, by

⁵⁵⁰ Edwin Clifford Beale, 'To Margaret Beale: Regarding "Your Great Grandfather"', 29 December 1932, 4, BFP.

⁵⁵¹ Helen Beale, "Personal Notebook - Family Things", c.1870.

Samuel Lane, hangs at the London Annuity Society.⁵⁵² Furthermore, an engraved likeness of Margaret's uncle, *Edwin Wilkins Field* (see Figure 29), by Charles George Lewis, was hung in the Dining Hall at University Hall in Gordon Square.⁵⁵³ Portraits provided a constant reminder of worthy and eminent men as an article referring to Edwin Wilkins Field in *The Spectator* of 1872 remarked; 'the picture is an aid to recall identity to those who knew the man'.⁵⁵⁴

For the Beale family, photographic portraits were also favoured, including hand-coloured images such as a double portrait of William John Beale and his wife, Martha Phipson produced around the middle of the nineteenth century (Fig. 168). It was not until the latter decades of James Beale's generation that fine art portraits became part of Beale family history. James's younger brother, *Alderman Charles Gabriel Beale* (1843-1912) was painted by Royal Academician, Walter William Oules in 1901 and presented in honour of his services to the City of Birmingham as three times Lord Mayor 1897-1899 (Fig. 169).⁵⁵⁵ After he died, in 1912 the University of Birmingham commissioned a memorial portrait by an unknown artist of *Charles Gabriel Beale Pro-Chancellor* in honour of his position as the University's first Vice-Chancellor from 1900 to 1912. Although portraits of Beale family women were rare by comparison, a pencil drawing of Charles Beale's wife, *Lady Mayoress Alice Beale* by Joseph Edward Southall in 1914 (Fig. 170), created in recognition of her civic service and position as Chair of the Executive Committee of Birmingham University, suggests that her status had parity with some of the Beale family men.

Thus in Beale family circles, portrait paintings or drawings were a sign of recognition and status, especially if they were executed by a well-known artist. On the occasion of his retirement in 1905, James Beale and his wife Margaret were painted by renowned artist, William Nicholson. To commemorate forty years of loyalty and dedication as company solicitor to the Midland Railways, James Beale's portrait was commissioned by the past and present members of

⁵⁵² Sylvanus Urban, 'Obituary - Henry Field, Esq', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1838, 212-213 (213).

⁵⁵³ After a portrait painted by Sir John Watson Gordon in 1858 in Thomas Sadler, *Edwin Wilkins Field, a Memorial Sketch* (Macmillan & Co, 1872), 59.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Edwin Wilkins Field', *The Spectator*, 18 May 1872, 19.

⁵⁵⁵ "Alderman C. G. Beale," *The Times*, September 2, 1912, The Times Digital Archive. 8.

the Midland Railways Board. It was presented by Chairman, Ernest Paget at a dinner held at the Midland Grand Hotel St. Pancras in January 1906.⁵⁵⁶ In his portrait, James Beale is sitting upright with his hands in his lap facing slightly to the left; his sombre gaze looks straight past the viewer beyond the picture frame (Fig. 171). In a statesman-like, three-quarter pose, it represents him as an outward-looking, respectable, city professional dressed in a dark formal suit. It is also naturalistic, his sagging chin is undisguised and his unease as a sitter is expressed through his intertwined fingers sub-consciously forming a barrier between himself and the viewer. Also depicted are attributes of the legal profession: by his left elbow, on a low table are a top hat and a thin stack of papers draped with an untied pink ribbon. Although Margaret Beale's portrait by Nicholson was painted at the same time as her husband's, it is composed differently (Fig. 172). It hints at the side profile format and muted colour palette of *Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1* 1871, painted by Nicholson's friend, American artist, James McNeill Whistler, who had recently died in 1903 (Fig. 173). Whistler's painting of his mother aroused controversy in the art world, not least because it was titled 'an arrangement' rather than being described as a portrait. The name was amended to *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* and shown at the 104th Royal Academy Exhibition in 1872, an event that the Beales may well have attended. Margaret Beale's profile portrait characteristically depicts her concentrating on her knitting with her eyes lowered and hands busy, her upright pose seems unrelaxed yet at the same time it is commanding. At the centre of the composition, her handiwork can be read as a symbol of her active, matriarchal authority within the domestic setting. Her shoulders are fashionably draped with a shimmering tulle shawl further emphasising her connection with finely crafted textiles. The ornate Regency style, gilt frame embellished with classical floral motifs adds potency and deliberately distinguishes Margaret's portrait from her husband's.

James and Margaret Beale's portraits were hung side-by-side at the centre of the house in the Staircase Hall, an important space for the display of historic emblems associated with ancient manor houses. As the main thoroughfare between the Drawing Room, Hall and Dining Room, visitors and guests would

⁵⁵⁶ 'The Directors of Midland Railway Co.', *Solicitors Journal* 50 (13 January 1906): 171.

have inevitably passed through and noticed the portraits of the master and mistress of the house. When they entered the Dining Room, these portraits were then visually connected to an eminent line of ancestors stretching back to Oliver Cromwell. With a backdrop of family portraits and a decorative scheme which borrowed its imagery from an idealised vision of a historic country manor, the Dining Room at Standen lent gravitas to family ritual and dining etiquette. In the English country house, according to Muthesius, the route from the Drawing Room to the Dining Room was considered very important.⁵⁵⁷ For the Beale family, it was an integral part of a daily ritual; those attending dinner at Standen gathered in the Drawing Room and were summoned to the Dining Room by the sounding of a gong. The procession of diners then moved along through the Inner Hall and through the door to the Dining Room which lay opposite. Here, room styling, the positioning of furniture, the room's decoration and prized portraits, unite with respectable standards of polite behaviour and dining ritual to exemplify family identity.⁵⁵⁸

The Dining Room at Standen was also a space where family identity and values were instilled in younger generations, often through the enactment of unwritten but commonly understood rules and rituals. Amy Beale's children remembered during a later visit to Standen that the rules governing the presence of children in the Dining Room were quite strict:

When sufficiently mature and well-behaved, the older children were promoted to lunch in the dining room, with linen covers protecting the embroidered chair seats. Now there was more luxurious food, but also more discipline.⁵⁵⁹

Stringent dining rules which governed the 'public face' of a family had to be balanced with the need for the Dining Room to be a space where family could share meals and create affectionate bonds.⁵⁶⁰ For the older children, it was undoubtedly a more formal atmosphere compared to eating meals in the nursery, but they understood what was expected. When grandson Barton

⁵⁵⁷ Muthesius and Seligman, *The English House* (1904), II, 86.

⁵⁵⁸ John C. Turpin, 'Dining Rooms: Measuring the Gap between the Edwardians and the Moderns', in *Domestic Interiors: Representing Homes from the Victorians to the Moderns*, ed. Gina Downey (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 63.

⁵⁵⁹ Worthington Family, "Standen Memories - Part I One Family's Memories," 1.

⁵⁶⁰ Rich, 'Designing the Dinner Party: Advice on Dining and Decor in London and Paris 1860-1914', 50.

Worthington recalled his childhood memories of Standen years later, he remembered dressing formally for dinner after hunting in the woods:

I'd rush in, dump what I'd killed in the little room at the top of the outside steps there, and then bustle upstairs, rip off all my smelly clothes, possibly if there was time leap into a bath, lukewarm it was, and out again, and then put on – we were expected to put on most days a black tie and a dinner jacket.⁵⁶¹

Barton observed the ritual of his grandfather carving the meat at the sideboard; as the Worthington family's *Memories of Standen* later recall:

At one rather formal lunch party with outside guests as well as family, grandfather was at the sideboard with Barton, a year younger than Betty alongside, admiring his carving.⁵⁶²

Although certain gendered rituals such as carving the meat were perpetuated at this time, the Dining room was no longer a space of masculine authority. This emanated from past tradition when the room was dominated by the master of the house.⁵⁶³

Although an aura of powerful masculinity would have been accentuated by the portraits of distinguished, male ancestors, the imposing portrait of Margaret Beale located just outside the entrance door would also have set the tone for this domestic interior. The portraits were counterbalanced by the interventions of the female members of the family, such as the home-made dining seat covers and fresh flower arrangements. A beautifully decorated table reflected a dilution of the Dining Room's traditionally masculine aura by the late nineteenth-century.⁵⁶⁴ Such careful attention to detail is illustrated in a photograph of the eldest daughter, Amy Beale arranging flowers in the Dining Room (Fig. 174). It was clearly a space where women of the family did not feel inhibited, in particular the younger generation, as another family photograph of Amy Beale parading a favourite dress demonstrates (Fig. 175).

Although an established, male orientated Beale family dynasty was conveyed and reinforced through the display of portraits in the Dining Room and Staircase Hall; a female presence was also generated in this space, manifested through

⁵⁶¹ Worthington, Transcript of 'A record of the memories of Standen', 18.

⁵⁶² Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories - Part I One Family's Memories', 1.

⁵⁶³ Rich, 54.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 59.

objects and decoration and epitomised in the prominent display of Margaret Beale's portrait as mistress of the house. It not only suggested parity with the master of the house but also a relaxation of the strictly gendered boundaries which belonged to a past Victorian tradition. In combining the family portraits with decorative motifs borrowed from an imagined medieval past and a visual aesthetic engendered by romantic dreams of a pre-industrial age, these relaxed social spaces at Standen evoked an atmosphere which conveyed respectability, permanence and solid family foundations.

4.2 Aesthetic interiors: Beauty, harmony and visions of femininity

The spiritual essence or 'human quality' of Standen was highlighted by architect Halsey Ricardo in 1900. He believed that the house portrayed its owners, and in that sense, it reflected their personality. The idea of describing a beautiful house by comparing its qualities to those of a painting was not a new phenomenon, especially when it related to the home of an artist. In 1893, artist J. S. Gibson wrote an article for the first edition of *The Studio*, claiming that a beautiful house was just like a fine artwork; it was an indication of an owner's sophisticated taste.

As the value of a picture consists in the expression of an artist's mind and is an index of its owner's artistic sympathies, so is a beautiful house the manifestation of the refinement of its owner's artistic temperament.⁵⁶⁵

Gibson thought home owners were like artists, encouraging them to create artistic interiors by developing their own ideas as a way to express their individuality. As Charlotte Gere has argued, for householders, one of the lasting legacies of the Aesthetic Movement was that 'interior style should be a form of personal expression'.⁵⁶⁶ It emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century with John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and was then expressed more explicitly in

⁵⁶⁵ J. S. Gibson, 'Artistic Houses', *The Studio: an illustrated magazine of fine and applied art*, 1 (1893), 215–28 (215).

⁵⁶⁶ Charlotte Gere, *The House Beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior* (London: Lund Humphries in association with the Geffrye Museum, 2000), 8.

the writings of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde in the 1870s and 1880s.⁵⁶⁷

Aestheticism was understood as a distinctive artistic style and a set of ideas, and its followers believed that art had the ability to make life more beautiful and offer a sense of spirituality that could surpass the material world. In an 1882 publication entitled *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, Walter Hamilton defined the Movement as an elite community of cultivated individuals whose ideas about beauty and taste should be admired and followed.⁵⁶⁸

The preferences and characteristics of 'Aesthetes' identified by Hamilton resonate with elements of the Beales' London life. For example, he details how the Grosvenor Gallery generated impetus in the Aesthetic Movement by providing like-minded artists of the Aesthete school with a place to exhibit their works. Not only would the Beales have been regular visitors to the gallery and mingled with its growing ensemble of Aesthetes, but, as mentioned in Part One, they affirmed their affiliation by loaning two paintings to the Winter Exhibition of 1878-9. Furthermore, wrote Hamilton, in architecture, 'the Queen Anne style is favoured by the Aesthetes'.⁵⁶⁹ This style also informed the Beales' taste, their architect had designed studio houses influenced by the 'Queen Anne' style prior to working on Standen. His designs were part of an architectural genre of London artists' houses and studios that represented core beliefs of the Aesthetic Movement.⁵⁷⁰ Gere illustrates that these buildings not only shaped the lives of their occupants but also influenced the homes being built by educated, middle-class professionals living within their radius. When the Beales contemplated owning their own home in the country, the decision they made was shaped within the context of a London artistic community that subscribed to ideas of Aestheticism. The Beales acquired limited edition print copies of works by some of the Movement's celebrated artists; such as an 1888 etching after Alma Tadema's *The Favourite Poet* by Leopold Lowenstam (Fig. 176), an 1890 print of Sir Frederic Leighton's *The Bath of Psyche* and an 1880 print of Sir Edward Burne-Jones' *The Golden Stairs*. The homes of these artists had

⁵⁶⁷ See John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Part I (Smith, Elder, and Company, 1848); Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, (Macmillan and Company, 1873) and Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (London: Ward Lock & Co., 1891).

⁵⁶⁸ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (London, Reeves and Turner, 1882), vii.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁷⁰ Gere, *Artistic Circles*, 9.

aesthetic interiors, some were strongly influenced by the medieval and others the oriental. The home of Edward Burne-Jones reflected a preference for the medieval style seen depicted in *The Dining Room at the Grange*, painted in 1898 by T.M. Rooke (Fig. 177) which features the painted *Ladies and Animals* sideboard. This was decorated by Edward Burne-Jones with medieval styled figures and complements the ochre-ground portière embroidered with Chaucerian figures.⁵⁷¹ Other artists' favoured a theme dominated by Eastern motifs: *The Drawing Room at Townshend House*, 1885 for example, by Anna Alma-Tadema, illustrates how an 'oriental' themed interior was composed of many influences (Fig. 178). A contemporary description of Alma-Tadema's home published in *The Art Amateur* by art historian Helen Zimmern in 1884, explained how it evoked a dream-like sense of disorientation and harmony:

But are we in Persia? In Byzantium? In Pompeii? In Delft? Or can we be in all together? [...] as the eye grows used to the scene we recognise that each is deftly kept apart though they thus seem to mingle.⁵⁷²

Although individual components of such a house might be culturally distinct, aesthetically it was an eclectic, harmonious mix. It was interiors such as these which would have inspired the decorative theme for Standen, largely assembled by Margaret Beale with advice from her daughter Maggie.

For Victorian women of Margaret Beale's generation, an appetite for exotic and oriental decorative goods had been fuelled by the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the other international exhibitions that followed. As a young woman interested in the arts, Margaret Beale would have been aware of these grand public events and may even have been one of their visitors. Inside a scrapbook from her school days remains a photographic memento of the Crystal Fountain from the Great Exhibition, depicted after being reassembled at the Sydenham site in 1854 (Fig. 179).⁵⁷³ Exotic designs of 'the orient' adorned many homes of the Kensington artistic set. In Leighton's house, for instance, a photograph of 1890 illustrates a large collection of oriental rugs in the Arab Hall (Fig. 180). Apart from their aesthetic qualities, goods made by non-western cultures were

⁵⁷¹ Originally came from Red House, one of the unfinished panels from Chaucer's 'Good Women' in *Ibid.*

⁵⁷² H. Zimmern, 'The Home of Alma-Tadema', *The Art Amateur* 10, no. 3 (1 February 1884): 72.

⁵⁷³ Affectionate Friends, 'Scrapbook - M Field'.

popular with Victorian consumers because they were thought to originate from communities who were free from the corrupting influence of capitalism and industrialisation.⁵⁷⁴ Thus textiles, ceramics and prints from 'the East' were considered to have a purity of form regarded as an exemplar of good design, core Arts and Crafts ideals. They adorned the studio houses of the London artists and were admired and purchased by wealthy middle-class patrons like the Beales to create 'artistic' homes of their own. Many of these furnishings were incorporated into Standen's interior décor, for example, all the principal rooms including the Staircase and landing were furnished with brightly patterned Turkey Carpets.⁵⁷⁵ A roll of Persian Stair carpet and four antique Pergamos rugs⁵⁷⁶ were purchased from Geo. P. & J. Baker, London manufacturers and importers of a variety of oriental carpets, silks and embroideries in June and July 1894.⁵⁷⁷

Thus the creation of an artistic house such as Standen was bound up with perceptions of aesthetic beauty and harmony which were manifested in a decorative interior that was rich with a variety of bold colours, textures and patterns. The Beales were concerned with visual appeal and appreciated the aesthetic qualities of different materials. As Muthesius has argued in his study of nineteenth-century domestic interiors, those involved in their design and creation 'placed a new emphasis on the textural and colour effect of fabrics, wood or metal objects as attractive in themselves.'⁵⁷⁸ Shape, tone, light and shade of individual components were gauged to create a harmonious whole when decorating and furnishing a domestic interior. For the Beales, an aesthetically pleasing home would not only have been perceived as a measure

⁵⁷⁴ Sarah Cheang, 'Selling China: Class, Gender, and Orientalism at the Department Store', in *Visual Merchandising: The Image of Selling*, ed. Louisa Larocci (Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 118.

H. Zimmern, 'The Home of Alma-Tadema', *The Art Amateur*, 10 (1884), 71–74 (72).

⁵⁷⁵ Geo. P. & J Baker, 'To J S Beale Esq.', 1894, MS 303, WSRO.

⁵⁷⁶ Ancient rugs were associated with Pergamos, one of the oldest cities of Asia Minor. The rugs would have been brightly coloured, they were commonly made in blue and red set off by white, see Edith Eliza (Ames) Norton, *Rugs in Their Native Land*, (New York, 1916), 97.

⁵⁷⁷ Since 1886 they had been based at Ivy Lane off Paternoster Row in East London, a site where visiting shoppers would have seen carpets laid out on the ground floor and textiles and other "soft goods" displayed above see Victoria and Albert Museum and G.P. & J. Baker Ltd, *From East to West: Textiles from G.P. & J. Baker, Victoria & Albert Museum 9 May-14 Oct. 1984*. ([London]: G.P. & J. Baker Ltd., 1984), 23.

⁵⁷⁸ Stefan Muthesius, *Poetic Home: Designing the 19th-Century Domestic Interior* (Thames & Hudson, 2009), 9.

of their personal taste but it would also have signalled an affinity with an elite, artistic circle. Living in close proximity to their London home, they undoubtedly paid homage to some of the artists and their wealthy patrons who relished in self-expression through themed aesthetic interiors.

Furthermore, manifestations of self-expression within the domestic arena were inextricably bound up with gender identity. Drawing and Morning Rooms in particular, have been perceived by some as 'constricted' feminine spaces. However, at Standen, a close analysis of Beale family photographs and drawings relating these spaces reveal that the term 'feminine space' did not mean restraint; rather, it signalled flexibility and liberation. Griselda Pollock has drawn attention to the way that such spaces no longer functioned as a 'space of sight for a mastering gaze' through a close analysis of the work of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot in *Vision and Difference*, first published in 1988.⁵⁷⁹ Although her understanding is framed by the ideology of 'separate spheres' in which she argues that 'modern' women were pictured as inhabiting different spaces to men, her acute analysis of the way in which women artists represent spatial order to articulate gender difference is particularly useful. It is also worth bearing in mind an aspect of Ruth Iskin's research in her *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting* of 2014, which stresses the importance of clothing and accessories to significations of female agency.⁵⁸⁰ She counters Pollock's argument with her discussion of the 'cosmopolitan Parisienne'; a female persona motivated by consumer culture who freely circulates the social spaces of Paris, characterised in the work of Impressionist artists in the 1880s and 1890s. Although this chapter focusses on the domestic environment of the Beale family women, it is important to stress that they were similarly 'cosmopolitan', using the spaces of London without restriction as consumers of home furnishings, fashion and culture.

This chapter examines images and texts relating to the Drawing Room and Morning Room to argue that Aestheticism played an integral part in the way that the Beale family women experienced and fashioned 'feminine space'. It

⁵⁷⁹ Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity', in *Vision and Difference : Feminism, Femininity and Histories of Art*, by Griselda Pollock, (Routledge, 2003), 70-127 (124).

⁵⁸⁰ Ruth Iskin, *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 198.

demonstrates that viewing their lived environment through the lens of Aestheticism enabled and impacted on how they negotiated the shifting paradigms of late-nineteenth century sexuality, individuality and personal identity.

The Drawing Room was clearly perceived by contemporary scholars to be a woman's domain, as German architect Hermann Muthesius observed in 1904, in the English house 'it was the preserve of the lady of the house'.⁵⁸¹

Accordingly, it was generally accepted that the lady of the house would be responsible for choosing and organising how the Drawing Room should be decorated and furnished.⁵⁸² Influential women writers of the period such as Mrs Talbot Coke reinforced this practice. Regularly advising her readers on the latest decorative and furnishing trends in publications such as *Hearth and Home* she believed that a Drawing Room should convey something of the personal characteristics and attributes of its owner:

[...] so much depends on its arrangement, on the way the furniture is grouped, the position of this tall screen, or that towering palm; it is, as it were, the soul of the house, and should express in some subtle way the leanings and tastes of its owner.⁵⁸³

At Standen, Margaret Beale was no exception; indeed, she appeared to relish the enormous task of furnishing a new home from scratch, diligently writing copious notes and lists to assist her. She clearly took responsibility for ensuring that the decorations and furnishings at Standen lived up to expectations. This meant carefully choosing carpets, curtains, furniture and other decorative objects that would showcase her artistic taste and signal her knowledge of aesthetic beauty and harmony as showcased by a family photograph taken of the Drawing Room c. 1902 (Fig. 181). As a 'domestic' space conventionally gendered feminine, the Drawing Room in particular, was subject to intense scrutiny, its occupants were watched and its decorative schemes judged. As Kinchin has argued, it was a space where 'people knew they were being

⁵⁸¹ Muthesius and Seligman, *The English House* (1904), II:83.

⁵⁸² Logan, *The Victorian Parlour*, 36.

⁵⁸³ Mrs Talbot Coke, 'Some Decorative Notions', *Hearth and Home* (London), 21 February 1895, 530.

observed and their performances were crucial to social and material success.⁵⁸⁴

The decorative theme of the Drawing Room at Standen is dominated by the sunflower, one of the most popular motifs of the Aesthetic Movement. It had already been widely utilised to decorate the homes of artists in the Beales' Holland Park neighbourhood. The black painted door frames at Leighton House, for example, were intricately decorated with sunflowers and described in some detail in 1882 by Moncure Daniel Conway:

[...] on each jamb there is at the bottom a spreading golden root, from which runs a stem with leaves; half-way up the stem ends in the profile of a sunflower in gold; another stem then passes up, ending in the full face of the sunflower, which at once crowns the foliation of the jambs, and makes a noble ornament for the capping of the door, which also has a central golden ornament.⁵⁸⁵

At Standen, a bold embossed sunflower design by Webb covers the surface of the copper light sconces made by arts and crafts coppersmith John Pearson (Fig. 182).⁵⁸⁶ Pearson also crafted the copper fireplace cheeks to Webb's design based on intermingling sunflowers with closed crowns (Fig. 183) and a fireplace fender also resplendent with sunflowers to complement the scheme (Fig. 184). It was not only the metalware of the Drawing Room that carried the sunflower motif; wallpaper from Morris & Co. *Sunflower* No. 275, in a green colourway, was also chosen (Fig. 185).⁵⁸⁷ The ubiquitous presence of the sunflower motif throughout the decorative scheme for Standen's Drawing Room demonstrates that the Beales were aiming to create an overall 'Aesthetic' theme for the room. As Muthesius has argued, 'there was one common motif, one sign of subscribing to Aesthetic taste, which could occur inside as well as outside: the sunflower.'⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁴ Kinchin, 'Performance and the Reflected Self: Modern Stagings of Domestic Space 1860-1914', 70.

⁵⁸⁵ Moncure Daniel Conway, *Travels in South Kensington: With Notes on Decorative Art and Architecture in England* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882), 195.

⁵⁸⁶ Pearson was a skilled craftsman of repoussé metalware and was encouraged by fellow artist C R Ashbee to become one of the founders of the Guild of Handicrafts co-operative in 1888.

⁵⁸⁷ Webb, 'Journal for Holly Bush House 1891 to 1894', 25 August 1894.

⁵⁸⁸ Stefan Muthesius, 'The Aesthetic Movement and Architecture', in *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900*, ed. Stephen Calloway, Lynn Federle Orr, and Esme Whittaker (London: V&A Publishing, 2011), 120.

The 'Aesthetic' decorative emblems of the Drawing Room were enhanced by the addition of Japanese ornaments and furnishings. Decorating homes with Japanese wares had been in fashion since the 1870s, as mentioned in Part Three, it was a craze encouraged by artists such as James McNeill Whistler who frequently used Japanese props in his paintings. In short, Japanese goods were essential ingredients in artistic households.⁵⁸⁹ They were an integral part of an Aesthetic Movement which believed that the sole purpose of art was to be beautiful and that life should imitate art. On aesthetic grounds, it meant that beauty was no longer the preserve of the 'fine arts', good taste could be represented by the decorative arts. It could be expressed in the display of a Japanese cabinet, an 'oriental' carpet from Turkey or even a sunflower motif.⁵⁹⁰ Such sentiments were widely disseminated by women's advice manuals and magazines that stressed how Japanese furnishings would impress their visitors. *Myra's Journal*, for example, published an article in 1896 detailing how one reader furnished her Drawing Room with a Japanese cabinet that was:

[...] a very handsome piece of furniture indeed and is much admired by our friends. The lacquered panels are all beautifully decorated with figures of men, birds and flowers in coloured ivories and mother-of-pearl.⁵⁹¹

The Drawing Room at Standen was furnished with a large Japanese cabinet which according to Margaret Beale's notebook was bought in London, probably for £50,⁵⁹² seen pictured in a 1973 photograph (Fig. 186). It was described in a handwritten inventory compiled in 1969 as a 'Redwood Cabinet, elaborately carved and decorated with figures and flowers etc. in mother of pearl and gilt embossment (7' 3" high & 4' 2" wide). Japanese – 19th Century'.⁵⁹³ Undoubtedly, this large, highly ornate cabinet would have been hugely impressive to all who set foot in the room. To the left of this cabinet, screening

⁵⁸⁹ Kramer, 'From Specimen to Scrap: Japanese Textiles in the British Victorian Interior, 1875-1900', 130.

⁵⁹⁰ A 'Camel' Turkey carpet (No. 30504) measuring 25' 1" x 11' 7" was purchased for £47 on 2 February 1894 see Geo. P. & J. Baker, 'Bill of Sale to James S Beale Esq.', 8 February 1894, MS 269, WSRO.

⁵⁹¹ W.J.S., 'How We Furnished Our House.—(Concluded).', *Myra's Journal* (London), 1 October 1896, 16.

⁵⁹² Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 3.

⁵⁹³ It resembles late nineteenth-century cabinets made by the Japanese especially for export to the West described as Japanese Shibayama cabinet. 'The Property of Miss Beale, Standen, East Grinstead, Sussex', 11 February 1969, 2, BFP.

off the doorway was a Japanese gold coloured fold-out screen. It effectively created a secluded space or 'cosy corner', a term originating from *inglenook*, defining a warm enclosed space that was often situated near the fire.⁵⁹⁴

Arranging furniture or textiles to section-off part of the room became a late-nineteenth century trend designed to add decorative dimension to what was often an uninteresting rectangular space. This screen can be seen displayed behind Maggie Beale in a family photograph of circa 1907 (Fig. 187). In this image a Japanese gold screen and large white lilies are 'Aesthetic' props framing Maggie Beale's maternal pose. Drawing on Kinchin's approach in which gender identity is understood as performative, the photograph of Maggie's 'cosy corner' frames a stage-like setting in which rituals and conventions associated with feminine identity are performed. The photograph captures a moment of lived experience in which Maggie admires the baby perched on her lap, seemingly performing the motherly duties she is yet to experience. Comfortably harmonising with the decorative, protective back-drop, the image associates Maggie with the feminine ideal of maternal nurture, whilst affirming her individuality and independence. As a single, mature woman her distance from the baby is palpable, she clearly feels uncomfortable by the baby's presence in her staged 'aesthetic' niche, dutifully posing but not engaging with the viewer to effectively deny any suggestion of maternal accord. Maggie's independence is endorsed by her aesthetic surroundings.

The idea that women should harmonise and complement their decorative interiors was not new. Scholars such as Dr. Jakob von Falke, historian of taste and aesthetics described 'Woman's Aesthetic Mission' in a publication of 1879:

[...] it is woman's duty at the present time, not only to bring beauty into the house, but also to help create it [...]. In a point of fact she should be herself the noblest ornament of her ornamental dwelling'.⁵⁹⁵

Von Falke viewed women as decorative, passive ornaments who were an integral part of a beautiful interior. Such views were based on an ideal model of femininity expressed in literature such as Coventry Patmore's *Angel of the*

⁵⁹⁴ Long, *The Edwardian House*, 170.

⁵⁹⁵ Charles Callahan Perkins from original by Jakob von Falke, *Art in the House: Historical, Critical, and Aesthetical Studies on the Decoration and Furnishing of the Dwelling* (L. Prang & Co., 1879), 319.

House series written in 1854 which stated that a woman's purpose in life was to selflessly serve her husband and family.

However, by 1894 the ideal perceptions of womanhood which had underscored Victorian conventions for so long were being challenged by the 'New Woman'. From respectable, middle-class homes, new women were pressing to break free from domesticity and outmoded social constrictions. They wanted the right to walk without a chaperone, to hold a job and to live alone in a flat or attend college. Such sentiments were expressed by Lady Kathleen Cuffe in 1894, in an article which appeared in *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review* entitled 'A reply from the Daughters'. Responding to an article written by Blanche Alethea Crackenthorpe entitled 'The Revolt of the Daughters', Cuffe's text identifies her as a 'New Woman' who insisted that all she was asking for was 'a small amount of liberty' for the next generation of women.⁵⁹⁶ Born in 1872, the same year as Maggie Beale, Cuffe's plea for more freedom would have been one of the issues faced by parents like James and Margaret Beale who still had four daughters under the age of twenty five when Standen was built. 'New Woman', identified by the way that she dressed and behaved has been associated with the term 'female aesthete' by literary scholar Talia Schaffer.⁵⁹⁷ Her study, which examines woman writers of 1890, argues that 'female aesthetes' struggled with 'conflicting notions of identity – being female yet being aesthetic; living like a New Woman while admiring Pre-Raphaelite maidens'. However, not all women were willing to label themselves as "New", as one commentator remarked in an article published in *Hearth and Home* in 1894:

But none of the New Women themselves will own to it. As long as they retain the petticoat of civilisation, and go to music-halls in their prettiest evening dresses and not in the skirt that is misnamed "divided", they hold themselves virtuously aloof, and decline to have the label 'new' attached to them.⁵⁹⁸

Therefore, 'female aesthetes' were women who sought to contest conventional gender roles but at the same time were concerned about their femininity. They

⁵⁹⁶ Kathleen Cuffe, 'A Reply from the Daughters', ed. by James Knowles, *The Nineteenth century: a monthly review*, Mar. 1877-Dec. 1900, 35 (1894), 437–42 (441).

⁵⁹⁷ Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (University of Virginia Press, 2000), 5.

⁵⁹⁸ 'The Modern Puzzle', *Hearth and Home* (London), 6 December 1894, 160.

did not want to appear overtly masculine, qualities often associated with the 'New Woman' and mocked in satirical periodicals like *Punch* (Fig. 188).

In common with many women in their social circle, Beale family women chose to express their individual identity through art and creativity, not least through Standen decorative interiors which were layered with representations of Aestheticism. Velvet and silk upholstery complemented Morris & Co. wallpaper and furniture, further enhanced by the plush and colourful combination of embroidered portieres and oriental carpets. Aestheticism provided women with an acceptable platform on which to negotiate their individuality, as Schaffer has pointed out; it provided 'a way that women could express their complicated views about the changing role of women'.⁵⁹⁹

A photograph c.1895 of Maggie Beale in the Drawing Room pictured sitting at the spinning wheel identifies her creative nature (Fig. 189). Besides her fashionable artistic dress, Maggie is actively engaged in the traditional feminine handicraft of spinning wool; although she blends with her artistic surroundings, she is virtuously employed. She works in front of a chimney piece decorated with Aesthetic motifs, the Japanese fan, the sunflower-embellished fender, over her left shoulder is hand-made embroidered portière and beneath her feet an oriental carpet. However, she is not consumed by her surroundings; the image focuses on her activity as a creative force as she concentrates on the task, by avoiding the viewer's gaze, she refutes objectification. Another photograph of Maggie Beale in the Drawing Room focusses on her artistic appearance and how it harmonises with the interior décor to suggest her individuality. She is pictured sitting in the private, secluded space of the deep three-quarter length bay of the Drawing Room with its south and east-facing windows c.1895 (Fig. 190). The alcove provides an architecturally distinct area to represent another version of the 'cosy corner'. At the centre of this image Maggie is wearing fashionable aesthetic dress and accessories which project artistic beauty. She is encircled by sunlight streaming through the window and the bold pattern of the Morris & Co. *Trent* chintz curtaining and seat pad. The photograph showcases Maggie's artistic credentials and illustrates how she was

⁵⁹⁹ Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, 5.

using symbols of aestheticism to express her feminine independence.⁶⁰⁰ A prototype for this style of composition had already been utilised in the work of artistic photographer Fred Hollyer who photographed artist Louise Jopling Rowe c. 1890 seated in a window niche wearing a loose-fitting artistic dress and flowing beads (Fig. 191). Thus the portrayal of Maggie Beale clothed in artistic dress and framed by the aesthetic décor of the Drawing Room alcove can be read as a representation of feminine empowerment. Besides her dress symbolising a sense of womanly freedom, it is likely that Maggie was actively involved in the creative process of constructing her pose. Participating in the construction of her self-image can be read as a form of enablement, for she is the subject of her own creativity. As art historian Gen Doy has pointed out, 'the conscious activity of a woman artist works against objectification, since she is the creative subject.'⁶⁰¹

Although the Drawing Room traditionally facilitated the display and performance of conventional ideas of feminine identity, especially in Margaret Beale's generation, the family's lived experience of the room exemplifies that the space also nurtured female creativity and intellectual advancement. Another 'cosy corner' of the Drawing Room as illustrated by early photographs is seemingly constructed as homage to aesthetic 'beauty and harmony'. The enclosed space is formed around 'a special *Charlotte* settee',⁶⁰² purchased in July 1894 from Morris & Co. and upholstered in a silk and linen damask resembling *Tulip and Rose* (Fig. 192).⁶⁰³ It was enclosed by two matching Morris & Co. designed *Artichoke* portières that had been embroidered by Margaret Beale and her daughters in the 1880s (Fig. 193). In a family photograph of the Drawing Room fireplace illustrated in Figure 181, one of these has been divided in two and hung either side of the fireplace with the second suspended out from the wall on a brass pole. Thus the secluded niche created around the settee provided a

⁶⁰⁰ 64¼ yds. Trent Chintz 7826 (pink, green yellow on blue colourway) was purchased on June 5 and sent to 'Taylor's' by Morris & Co (probably curtain makers). 11¼ yds. were returned for credit on July 3, see bill of sale from Morris & Company, 'To J S Beale Esq', August 1894, 2, MS 339, WSRO.

⁶⁰¹ Gen Doy, *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* (I.B.Tauris, 2005), 52.

⁶⁰² Morris & Company, 'To J S Beale Esq', MS 339, 2–3.

⁶⁰³ Besides *Golden Bough*, it was the only pattern available in silk and linen damask at that time. Today the sofa is on display in the Morning Room and beneath its loose cover it is upholstered in Morris & Co *Strawberry Thief* fabric.

backdrop for privacy, relaxation and creative pursuits. A number of Maggie Beale's drawings illustrate how it was often used by the women of the family for reading, needlework and intimate afternoon conversation. One sketch illustrates her sister Helen sat in the 'cosy corner' engrossed in her needlework, respectably employed in a 'woman's' pastime. Comfortable in her surroundings, she ostensibly represents an ideal picture of feminine virtue (Fig. 194). However, as a sketch of her younger brother Sam sleeping on the settee illustrates, this snug Drawing Room corner is also a space where men can relax (Fig. 195). Maggie's drawing mocks Sam for being asleep at ten o'clock in the evening, ironically comparing him to *Flaming June*, Frederic Leighton's 1895 painting of a beautiful sleeping woman. Leighton's painting has more recently been interpreted as an example of his anti-feminist views in the way that its beautiful female subject is portrayed as a passive object of male desire.⁶⁰⁴ Maggie's sketch of sleeping Sam subverts gender roles to suggest that conventions underpinning the conventionally gendered space of the Drawing Room had become much more flexible.

The Drawing Room was also a space where Margaret Beale and her daughters would entertain their friends and relations. As grandson Barton Worthington remembered, 'important ladies were shown into the Drawing Room'. Independent, intelligent and artistic women are well-represented amongst the names listed in Standen's visitor books. For example, embroidery specialist Louisa F. Pesel (1870-1847), who was a student of Lewis Foreman Day at the Royal College of Art, visited in August 1894.⁶⁰⁵ She was of the same generation as Maggie Beale and would have been intrigued to take a tour of the new house. The women most probably discussed embroidery during her stay; she may even have advised Margaret Beale on antique textiles. They both shared an interest in home-grown crafts and were part of a community of affluent women whose support of Arts and Crafts industries was conflated with national pride. Such sensibilities were encouraged by influential merchandisers such as Arthur 'Lasenby' Liberty, the founder of Liberty & Co. who attributed patriotism amongst Royal and distinguished English gentlewomen to a growing support for

⁶⁰⁴ Daryl Ogden, *The Language of the Eyes*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), 154.

⁶⁰⁵ 'Visitor Book 1 1894-1910, Standen', 1.

the diminished English Silk Brocade Industry of Spitalfields in *The Studio* magazine of 1893.⁶⁰⁶

Margaret Beale signalled her allegiance to this powerful group of women by noting in her furnishing book that the 'brocade' style curtains hung at the Conservatory doors were 'Old Spitalfield silks'.⁶⁰⁷ Purchased originally from Debenham & Freebody, they were made from a 'fine' antique brocade cover that was altered and mounted with a rich velvet margin and silk lined.⁶⁰⁸ These two portière curtains complemented the rich aesthetic décor of the Drawing Room, as an 1898 family photograph of Grace Kenrick, née Nettlefold, with baby son Tim illustrates (Fig. 196). The monotone photograph hardly does justice to the image of mother and baby who seemed to be immersed in a rich and colourful interior represented by the green sunflower wallpaper, brocade silk curtains, patterned chair upholstery and table cloth. Assembled from an aesthetic cacophony of patterns, colours and textures that intended to create a stunning, artistic effect; this image portrays a decorative scheme which demonstrates Margaret Beale's unique perception of aesthetic beauty.⁶⁰⁹

At Standen, it was not unusual for strict rules to govern what time of day the Drawing Room could be used; it 'was not entered, except by staff and flower-arrangers', according to Amy Beale's descendants, 'until after lunch'.⁶¹⁰ Those organising flowers had an important daily task: as stylish women's magazines like *Le Follet* advised, rooms filled with 'every conceivable [floral] arrangement' were in vogue for the 'fashionable Drawing Rooms of London and Paris'.⁶¹¹ In the afternoons, the room was often used by Margaret Beale and her daughters for sewing and reading. Another of Maggie's sketches drawn in 1908 depicts her mother seated in the Drawing Room on a chair to the right of the fireplace (Fig. 197). The curving lines of Margaret Beale's relaxed profile echo the

⁶⁰⁶ He was referring to H.R.H. the Duchess of Teck and Princess Victoria Mary in Lasenby Liberty, 'Spitalfields Brocades', *The Studio: an illustrated magazine of fine and applied art*, 1893, 1:1, 20–23 (21).

⁶⁰⁷ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 65.

⁶⁰⁸ Debenham and Freebody, Wigmore Street, 'Mrs J S Beale, Bill of Sale', May 12 1897, MS 363, WSRO.

⁶⁰⁹ Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior*, 42.

⁶¹⁰ Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories, Part II, "More about the People"', 4.

⁶¹¹ 'Drawing Room Floral Decoration', *Le Follet: Journal du Grand Monde, Fashion, Polite Literature, Beaux Arts &c. &c.*, 1890, 87.

contours of the antique chair; here Maggie's drawing visualises her mother comfortably harmonising with the materiality of the room. To dispel any thoughts that her mother should be viewed as merely ornamental, in the title of her drawing Maggie Beale hints at her intellectual standing to record that she was reading "Esmond", a historical novel by Thackeray considered by contemporary critics to be outstanding.⁶¹² In the Beale household, although reading in the Drawing Room was enacted as a feminine pursuit, this was perceived as a marker of serious intellect rather than one of the 'superficial' feminine accomplishments.

Through the performance of conventional rituals in the Drawing Room, such as reading novels to her grandchildren, Margaret Beale and her daughters negotiated a version of femininity that stressed the virtue of diligence and hard-work. Sat in her fireside chair Margaret Beale would read novels to her grandchildren whilst knitting. Even then, Granny did not suffer idle hands, as the Worthington family later remembered:

After lunch Granny read aloud to us all from her chair by the drawing room fire, RL Stevenson, Harrison Ainsworth, Walter Scott, John Buchan etc. She knitted socks throughout, concealing from us her omission of boring or unsuitable passages. We all had to be occupied with embroidery, knitting, sketching each other, or, for the youngest, threading beads.⁶¹³

Other family entertainments took place in the Drawing Room, including amateur theatricals in the form of charades or a play. A photograph from a family album taken in the Drawing Room shows that one corner of the Drawing Room had literally become a stage setting for a theatrical performance. Maggie Beale and her brother Sydney with cousins or friends are dressed-up as theatrical characters as they entertain the rest of the family (Fig. 198). Performance in the Drawing Room functioned as a transformative medium; it was a space where alternative identities, both male and female, could be tried and enacted.⁶¹⁴ It offered the chance to experience a different version of femininity or masculinity,

⁶¹² The History of Henry Esmond by William Makepeace Thackeray, published in 1852, a narrative praised for its historical accuracy and detailed descriptions of the Queen Anne period in Michael Schmidt, *The Novel* (Harvard University Press, 2014), 306.

⁶¹³ Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories - Part I One Family's Memories', 6.

⁶¹⁴ Pamela Cobrin, 'Dangerous Flirtations: Politics, the Parlor, and the Nineteenth-Century Victorian Amateur Actress', *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 16, no. 3 (November 2006): 3.

often emulating comic characters, heroes and heroines, even characters from favourite historical novels, as a photograph of the Beales' cousin *Norah Beale in Jane Austen date clothes* exemplifies (Fig. 199).⁶¹⁵ Although presented under the auspices of light-hearted entertainment, a myriad of identities were created from the dressing-up trunk at Standen. Stored with assembly instructions, diagrams and even photographs to ensure they were correctly worn, these costumes were cherished and still remain in Standen's collection today (Fig. 200).

The Morning Room was another domestic space traditionally associated with femininity (Fig. 201), which in the late-nineteenth century was more likely to be associated with liberty rather than repression. According to the author of an article entitled 'House Furnishing' which appeared in *The Woman at Home* magazine c.1895, it was a space where women could be independent:

[...] 'things may be left on tables without up-setting the equanimity of a tidily minded lady of the house [...] in fact, where we may be ourselves and follow our pursuits according to our own sweet will.'⁶¹⁶

The idea that the Morning Room was a room for individual self-expression is relevant to Standen, especially for Margaret Beale, the person who was probably more intimately connected with this room than any of the other living spaces in the house. The decorative scheme, her furnishings note-book and some of the family memories connected with this space reveal how it reflected many aspects of her personal identity. Memoirs of the grandchildren, for instance, invariably describe this room as being a creative, feminine space, used by their grandmother and other women of the family. According to the Worthingtons it was 'the centre of the ladies of the household' [...] 'where they wrote letters, read the papers and consulted over embroidery patterns and colours'.⁶¹⁷ It was also a place of serious business, used by Margaret Beale for planning and organising household management. Dorothy Fitzwilliams, a granddaughter, later recalled how she 'used to remember her [Grandmother]

⁶¹⁵ Norah Beale (1874-1971) was the daughter of Charles G Beale (James Beale's younger brother); in 1906 she married her cousin Wilfred Byng Kenrick (1872-1962).

⁶¹⁶ 'House Furnishing', *The Woman at Home* (London), c. 1895, 74.

⁶¹⁷ Worthington Family, 'Standen Memories - Part I One Family's Memories', 4.

adding up the laundry book and things of that sort, she did all her writing at the desk there in the morning'.⁶¹⁸

It is likely that most of Margaret Beale's letter writing would have taken place in the Morning Room; there was even a conveniently located brass post-box in the corridor outside. The postman called twice-a-day, as grandchild Phyllis Wager later remembered; 'he would collect the letters from the box as he was making a delivery'.⁶¹⁹ Margaret Beale not only wrote regularly to close relations and friends to maintain social and family networks but also to acquaintances established through her passion for gardening. She corresponded about plants and gardening with friends and experts such as William Robinson who lived nearby at Gravetye Manor. She kept a copy of a book by Robinson entitled *Gravetye Manor, or Twenty years' work round an old manor house* on the fitted bookshelves in this room, together with many other books on gardening and horticulture.

Margaret Beale's passion for gardening and the natural world is reflected in the floral decorative scheme chosen for the room. She purchased just over 48 yards of *Daffodil* chintz pattern No. 8777 from Morris & Co. on February 8 1894 to line the walls and curtain the Morning Room. It was originally a larger and bolder print than the modern copy which hangs in the house today. The idea for this scheme may have been inspired by William Morris, who from the outset intended his chintz fabrics to be used as wall-hangings, although the idea was not widely appreciated. As his biographer John W. Mackail recorded, 'their decorative effect in a room is perhaps ten-fold that of papers; and yet his [Morris's] appeal to use them for the purpose for which they were meant fell on the public in vain'.⁶²⁰ The colourway of *Daffodil*, consisting of yellow, greens and pink on a French navy ground was a floral tribute and a bold statement of 'aesthetic' decorative taste (Fig. 202). As a wall decoration it echoed the way that William Morris had earlier redecorated the Green Room at his home at

⁶¹⁸ Mrs Dorothy Fitzwilliams, Oral Archive SO/ST/SO5. 'Recorded tour of the house' Transcript, 4 October 1999, 24, Digital Archive, NTS.

⁶¹⁹ Mrs Phyllis Wager, daughter of Amy Beale and granddaughter of James Samuel and Margaret Beale., 25.

⁶²⁰ John William Mackail, *The Life of William Morris* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899), 57.

Kelmscott Manor where he covered the walls in *Kennett* chintz.⁶²¹ According to Hart, through the use of this patterned chintz, Morris was effectively expressing the blurring of a distinction between indoor and outdoor life at Kelmscott.⁶²² At Standen, the abundance of the *Daffodil* fabric that lined the Morning Room walls may have been intended to create the same impact.

The fabric-lined walls of the Morning Room were a bold decorative statement; the space not only referenced Margaret Beale's personal interest in the natural world and her garden at Standen but it also displayed her empathy with Aestheticism. A fashionable style represented in home interiors, an aesthetic style was adopted by those who were artistically and progressively minded. As suffrage campaigner Frances E. Willard explained in August 1893, in an article written for the *Woman's Herald*, a weekly feminist magazine, '[...] it is certain that today the aesthetic side of life is strongly emphasised by the intellectual, philanthropic and reformatory women of my country.' Although the Beale women did not join women's suffrage groups, the family did not shy away from causes that furthered women's independence. As mentioned in Part One, James Beale was a Director and Margaret Beale one of the shareholders of Ladies' Residential Chambers, a company established in 1888 by Agnes Garrett to provide purpose-built accommodation for middle-class working women. Investors in the scheme must have been committed to the cause, for although it was a business venture, it is unlikely that any of those who purchased shares would see any real returns for their money.⁶²³ A high proportion of the residents of Chenies Chambers, the address of the firm's first housing development, could be defined as independent, 'New Women', some of whom were qualified professionals and known suffrage sympathisers. Dr. Mary Louisa Gordon (1861-1941) for example, who described herself as 'Physician and Surgeon, Registered General Practitioner' in the 1891 Census became the first English Lady Inspector of Prisons in 1908. Although the women of the Beale family were not working professionals or 'New Women', they found other ways to express their individual identity. One of these was through dress, in

⁶²¹ Society of Antiquaries, 'Kelmscott Manor and Estate Conservation Plan' (Society of Antiquaries, November 2013), 1-130, accessed 26 October 2014. www.sal.org.uk/media/258610/2013_Nov_Kelmscott_CMP_Final_low-res.pdf, 76.

⁶²² *Kennett* chintz was designed in 1883, see Hart, *Arts and Crafts Objects*, 85.

⁶²³ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 208.

particular, dressing to harmonise and unify with 'aesthetic' elements of Standen's interior décor.

Accordingly, the individual photographs of Margaret Beale and her daughters of c.1895-1901 captured against the background of the Morning Room décor can be read as statements of self-fashioning (Fig. 203). Dressed in 'artistically' styled tea-gowns framed by the highly decorative backdrop of the Morris wall-hanging, the images identify them as fashionable 'aesthetic' women. Artistic dress, signified by loose-fit and other elements such as puffed sleeves, smocking and embroidery, was integral to the Aesthetic movement.⁶²⁴ A study by dress historian, Kimberley Wahl, examines how this clothing fashion was often worn for its ability to subvert Victorian conventions that constricted the lives of so many women. Thus in adopting such a style, women not only 'had the potential to signify a range of personal values', they were also individually expressing their identity.⁶²⁵ As early as 1878, in *The Art of Beauty*, Mrs Haweis wrote about relationship between dress and identity: 'Dress is the second self, a dumb self, yet a most eloquent exposition of the person'.⁶²⁶ She believed that dress was a form of self-expression, asserting that 'the colours and forms we employ should reflect our tastes and harmonise with our character'.⁶²⁷ This also meant blending in with home interiors, as design scholar Kinchin has illustrated, women were being advised to coordinate their dress and looks to their home décor.⁶²⁸ In the Morning Room, the physical form of the Morris textile wall-hanging clearly provoked an aesthetic response; the striped dress worn by Maggie Beale even echoed the downward striping of the *Daffodil* chintz. The photographs of the Beale family women portray how each sitter harmonises with their aesthetic backdrop. Captured in a photographic image that resembles a painted portrait, they undoubtedly signify a declaration of individual identity. As Kinchin has contended, 'interior settings became a frame delimiting the

⁶²⁴ Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed As in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (UPNE, 2013), xi.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Mary Eliza Joy Haweis, *The Art of Beauty* (New York : Harper & Brothers)1878, 11.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁶²⁸ Juliet Kinchin, "'From Drawing Room to Scullery: Reading the Domestic Interior in the Paintings of Walter Sickert and the Camden Town Group'", in *The Camden Town Group in Context*, ed. Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, Jennifer Mundy (eds.) (Tate, 2012), accessed 2 November 2014. www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/juliet-kinchin-from-drawing-room-to-scullery-reading-the-domestic-interior-in-the-r1104375, 2.

boundaries of a living artwork which entailed matching the female figure, dress and complexion to the domestic environment.'⁶²⁹ One contemporary example is illustrated by a portrait of Elfrida Elizabeth Bird (1848-1928) *Mrs Luke Ionides*, painted by W. Blake Richmond in 1879; as a member of the Ionides clan she would have been known within the Beales' London social circle (Fig. 204). The image depicts her in aesthetic dress and visually associates her identity with the materiality of her 'aesthetic' domestic interior.

The 'artistic' photographs of Margaret Beale and her daughters in the Morning Room illustrate how the materiality of the domestic interior was actively involved in mediating a personal identity. Sofaer's study regarding the power that objects have to effect change both aesthetically and socially is particularly relevant to this analysis. To effect change 'aesthetically', Sofaer argues, connects with how the physical form of an object provokes an aesthetic response, whereas, change effected 'socially' is related to the way in which objects can translate or generate meaning as dynamic agents.⁶³⁰ The combination of the splendid fashionable gowns, complementing and almost merging into the striking backdrop of the Morris '*Daffodil*' chintz and upholstered furniture signifies the Beale's aesthetic sensibilities and associates them with a social identity recognised in artistic circles beyond the domestic realm. Thus, '[b]ecause they bring identities into being objects are powerful media for social action and shared public understandings.'⁶³¹

Other highly patterned and colourful textiles used to upholster a number of Morris & Co. armchairs purchased for the room added to its 'artistic' decorative scheme. A collage of images illustrating a profusion of patterns, colours and designs demonstrates the extent to which the decorative theme for this room was inspired by aestheticism (Fig. 205). Two Morris & Co. easy chairs and a settee were purchased early in 1894.⁶³² One of the chairs, the '*Sunbury*' design, was covered in *Wandle* (Fig. 206), and the other, described on the Bill of Sale as a '*Froissart*' style, was upholstered in *Tulip and Willow* (Fig. 207).⁶³³ The

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁶³⁰ Sofaer, 'Introduction: Material and Identity', 2.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Morris & Co, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq., 32 Holland Park', 1 April 1894, MS 288, WSRO.

⁶³³ It was later known as the *Langford* design.

sofa, a mahogany *Hardcastle* settee, was covered in *Lodden* chintz (Fig. 208). These colourful and highly patterned Morris fabrics were combined with the geometrical motifs of a Turkey Carpet described as 'Mosaic', purchased from Geo. P. & J. Baker as illustrated by a photograph of Dorothy Beale and her friend in Figure 201. It is significant that the Morning Room was chosen as a back-drop for a photograph which memorialised the bonds of school-girl friendship. At aged nineteen, nearing the end of their finishing school days, they would have been contemplating new identities as independent, adult women.

Part Five: Travelling and collecting

The main feature of the house is this gradual process and ascent to the studio, and the arrangement of the ground floor, where hall opens out of hall, reviving now antique, now medieval, now Renaissance [sic] Italy, from Florence to Rome, [...]; and yet it is not Rome, nor Sicily, nor Egypt, but a memory, a vision seen through modern eyes.⁶³⁴

In her description of the home of artist Frederic Leighton, Mary Eliza Haweis stressed the eclectic appearance of its interior decor, noting an assortment of styles from past times and distant lands assembled to recreate a modern pastiche of history. Neapolitan bronzes, Persian enamels and plates, Syrian tiles, blue Nankeen china and a frieze by Walter Crane were just some of the objects collected by Leighton and used to decorate his studio house. These and other carefully selected items formed a unique collection through which he fashioned himself as an artist of sophisticated taste. According to Anne Anderson, collectors like Leighton were 'one of a generation of bric-a-brac hunters for whom collecting was a means of establishing a reputation for originality and refinement'.⁶³⁵ Leighton House was one of the artistic interiors that would have inspired wealthy, middle-class home-owners like the Beales who were seeking to create an individual and artistic home. Collecting antiques and art objects not only appealed to artists but also to their patrons and others who identified with Aestheticism and self-expression through art and beautiful interiors.⁶³⁶ For aesthetes, artefacts possessed some kind of spirituality, they could even express intangible human characteristics like internal strength and poise, as Walter Hamilton asserted in 1882:

Chippendale furniture, dados, old fashioned brass & wrought iron work, medieval lamps, stained glass in small squares and old china are all held to be the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace and intensity.⁶³⁷

Antiques combined with decorative art and domestic paraphernalia evoked a mystical aura emanating from their unique and sometimes colourful history. Such objects were actively acquired by collectors who sought to furnish their homes with an assortment of diverse styles and exotic objects, mingling modern

⁶³⁴ Mary Eliza Joy Haweis, *Beautiful Houses: Being a Description of Certain Well-Known Artistic Houses* (Printed by S. Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882), 3.

⁶³⁵ Anderson, 'The "New Old School"', 315.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁶³⁷ Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, 34.

pieces with 'the antique'. A description of the refined, artistic atmosphere of Upwood Gorse, the home of Sir John and Lady Jane Tomes, illustrates the type of decorative interior that was assembled by friends close to the Beales:

It was a delight to people of education and taste to spend an afternoon in that beautiful house under the guidance of Lady Tomes, who was so well versed in, and appreciative of, the large and varied collection of furniture and decorative objects with which it was so richly stored.⁶³⁸

It is further exemplified in *Sir John Tomes*; a painting by Carlile Henry Hayes Macartney of c. 1880 depicting a room with a mix of Aesthetic features such as blue and white china, an oriental rug and Queen Anne style furniture (Fig. 209).

This Chapter examines how the Beales' passion for travel was combined with an enthusiasm for collecting antiques and art objects to furnish and decorate Standen and their London home. Extant archive texts relating to their travel experiences suggest that they should be regarded as 'genuine collectors' whose collection of travel souvenirs was laden with meaning and memories. Walter Benjamin defined such collectors as those who considered:

The period, the region, the craftsmanship, the former ownership – for a true collector the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopaedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object.⁶³⁹

Benjamin, who in this instance was specifically discussing collectors of old books, argues that to a 'true collector', acquisition represents the rebirth of an object as it becomes part of their collection.⁶⁴⁰ Seen through Benjamin's eyes, the Beales' collecting practices would have been interpreted as representing their desire for renewal or regeneration of the 'old world'.⁶⁴¹ Each new thing added to their collection not only connected them with the past life of the object or the memory that it represented, but it also engendered the objects' new beginning. Thus, instrumental in bridging old and new worlds and cultures, the 'fate of the object' acquired by the Beales was destined for display within their contemporary private interior.

⁶³⁸ Carl Schelling, *Personal Recollections of Sir Charles Tomes and Others* (John Bale, Sons & Danielson, 1936), 16.

⁶³⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 60.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

With these ideas in mind, this section offers a radically different view of the Beales' taste and collecting practices from those expressed by scholars of the 1970s and 80s. Peter Rose, for instance, in *Saving Standen* of 1983, championed the role that architects Arthur and Helen Grogan, Standen's appointed administrators, played in rescuing the property for the National Trust.⁶⁴² Rose portrayed the Grogans as dedicated Philip Webb enthusiasts, who believed that the house interior was lacking in suitable Arts and Crafts objects. He outlined how they embarked on a mission in the 1970s to strengthen the Morris/Webb character of the house. This often meant rejecting family objects or pieces symbolising Aestheticism, such as replacing a large, ornate Japanese cabinet in Standen's Drawing Room with an inlaid Morris & Co. cabinet designed by George Jack. It was an interpretation strategy that concerned experts like architect John Brandon-Jones, as expressed in a letter to Sir John Betjeman of The Victorian Society in October 1972. The National Trust appeared to attach 'little importance' to Standen's furnishings and interiors; he pointed out, 'because the place was not completely fitted out with Morris-Webb furniture'.⁶⁴³ Brandon-Jones argued that none of Webb's houses were 'an exhibition of Morris furniture [...] he built houses to suit the people he worked for'.⁶⁴⁴ In other words, Webb respected his clients' taste in furnishings and décor, giving them space to create a home that was individually theirs.

However, as Rose suggests, the Grogans believed that Margaret Beale's taste was out-dated, asserting that she only bought a few pieces of antique furniture from London dealers to achieve a 'quaint, artistic effect'.⁶⁴⁵ Such a view drew on nineteenth-century perceptions of women collectors, in which women were categorised as mere consumers of objects who acquired pieces through the pleasure of shopping.⁶⁴⁶ Definitions of what constituted a collection were often measured against notions of men's collecting practices which were thought of as 'serious and creative', where items were purchased according to a

⁶⁴² Rose, 'The Saving of Standen', 176.

⁶⁴³ Brandon-Jones, 'Dear Brother John: Letter Ref: Meeting with Martin Beale, Helen Beale's Nephew'.

⁶⁴⁴ John Brandon-Jones, 'Dear Brother John', 3 October 1972, STA01/File5, NTSR.

⁶⁴⁵ Rose, 'The Saving of Standen', 177.

⁶⁴⁶ Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (Routledge, 2013), 208.

predetermined rationale.⁶⁴⁷ Just as men's collections can be interpreted as extensions of the self, so can those domestic collections gathered by women.⁶⁴⁸ Although, Margaret Beale was the driving force, the Beales invariably selected items as a couple, to reveal that polarised gendered collecting practices were less evident in their relationship. If anything, on occasions their roles were in fact reversed with Margaret Beale adopting a serious and creative manner associated with male collectors and James Beale content to indulge in the pleasure of shopping with his wife and daughters. Their collecting pursuits invariably acted as a marriage-bonding activity, enabling the couple to participate in practices of the male 'connoisseur' collector, as well as in enjoying the 'feminine nurturance' of building a domestic collection together.⁶⁴⁹

The Beales actually purchased a good many items for Standen from London dealers, such as a single inlaid card table for the Drawing Room from antique dealer and cabinet maker Charles Sale in Church Street, Kensington in January 1894.⁶⁵⁰ However, they also spent a fair amount of leisure time travelling by train and carriage to places further afield to actively seek out antique and reproduction furniture, prints, ceramics and contemporary *objets d'art*; chosen as accessories that would form part of Standen's artistic decorative scheme. Their collecting pursuits often formed part of a combined travel and pleasure-seeking experience. It was not unusual for them to acquire items to send home whilst they were away on holidays abroad or even shorter, weekend travels in England. The pleasure of the collecting experience was just as important as finding the right piece of furniture or a beautifully hand-crafted object to furnish the new house. In gathering a collection of objects with the aim of showcasing them to others, collectors were effectively facilitating opportunities to broadcast their knowledge about their art objects and about themselves.⁶⁵¹ Moreover, it was an enterprise that husband and wife could enjoy together, one of the shared experiences that helped to reinforce a happy marital union. Queen

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Russell W. Belk, 'Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (Routledge, 1994), 251.

⁶⁵⁰ Charles Sale, 'Dr to J S Beale Esq.', 22 January 1894, MS 266, WSRO.

⁶⁵¹ Alla Myzelev and John Potvin, 'Introduction: The Material of Visual Cultures', in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting* (Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 1-36 (10).

Victoria and Prince Albert for example, enjoyed collecting furniture together as newlyweds for their private residence at Osborne House, an activity that seemingly invigorated their marriage.⁶⁵² In this sense, art collecting can be understood as a form of 'play' within a marriage, which was the case for avid collector, Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812-1895) and her new husband Charles in the 1850s, who found travelling and collecting together offered an exciting and intimate way of communicating and enjoying each other's company.⁶⁵³

5.1 Holiday hunting for furniture

Collecting could be a liberating experience, especially for middle-class women like Margaret Beale. Dianne Sachko Macleod's study regarding art collecting as play, which examines the physiological motives behind women's collecting practices provides a useful framework with which to interpret Margaret Beale's travelling and collecting experiences. In particular, she contends that a fascination for art objects inspired women's dreams and their desire to participate in social and cultural interests beyond the domestic realm.⁶⁵⁴ In Margaret Beale's case, her weekend travel excursions and longer holidays with her husband and family was an activity that regularly took her out of the home environment. For her, it was a meaningful opportunity to examine and purchase furniture, art objects, travel mementoes and even plants to adorn the home and garden. As the driving force behind the couple's collecting activities, her agency is evidenced by her name being on many of the extant bills of sale detailing the objects purchased as Standen was furnished. For example, on 8 November 1893, Margaret Beale purchased a mahogany Chippendale table from J. Roake, a 'New and Second-hand Furniture' dealer based in her childhood home town of Leamington.⁶⁵⁵ She also selected an eighteenth-century, walnut inlaid chest of drawers on a reproduction stand for her bedroom (Fig. 210) and a

⁶⁵² Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Enchanted Lives, Enchanted Objects: American Women Collectors and the Making of Culture, 1800-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 24.

⁶⁵³ Dianne Sachko Macleod, 'Art Collecting As Play: Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812-1895)', *Visual Resources* 27, no. 1 (March 2011): 22.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁵⁵ J. Roake, 'Mrs James Beale', November 8th 1893, MS 273, WSRO.

small Sheraton table for the Morning Room from the Leamington Spa cabinet maker and upholsterer W. Stoney on 12 March 1894.⁶⁵⁶

Together, the Beales visited antique and secondhand furniture dealers located all over England. When their children were young, they holidayed at seaside holiday resorts such as Southwold in Suffolk, as depicted in an 1887 photograph from the family album (Fig. 211). Items of household furniture and china were bought on various visits, such as a 'Wedgewood dessert service with clematis pattern' in 1887 (Fig. 212) and also a cupboard that was later placed in the Servants' Hall.⁶⁵⁷ Another of the Beales' favourite places for holidays and short breaks was the popular spa town of Bath with its historic reputation for being one of the premier tourist attractions of the aristocracy and wealthy middle-classes. In particular, they visited Mallett and Son, a renowned and respectable dealer of new and antique furniture, founded in 1865. Their showroom had not long been established in 'the Octagon' in Milsom Street in 1894; it must have been quite a visitor attraction, having previously been home to one of the most fashionable churches in Bath.⁶⁵⁸ Perhaps the Beales were eager to secure antique and reproduction furniture from a reputable provincial dealer that might offer a different selection of stock from London outlets. On 9 February 1894 they selected a quantity of old and antique furniture including another 'inlaid table' for the Drawing Room and two 'old Italian chairs plus two 'old Italian rugs' for the Hall.⁶⁵⁹ Luxuriously upholstered antique furniture also attracted the Beales' attention at Mallett's, such as two silk-covered chairs for the Drawing Room which are probably those depicted in the 1973 photograph illustrated in Figure 186.⁶⁶⁰ On their visit to Mallett's in June they choose some more items of furniture for the Drawing Room, including two more satinwood tables and a drawing room satinwood cabinet, 'done-up as new', with fall-down bureau.⁶⁶¹ The couple were clearly selecting their idea of 'the right' individual

⁶⁵⁶ Margaret Beale's furnishing notebook details that 2 tables priced £3 and £4 came from Stoney although there is only one listed on the Bill, priced '£3' W. Stoney, 'Bill of Sale to Mrs J S Beale', 12 March 1894, MS 283, WSRO.

⁶⁵⁷ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 7.

⁶⁵⁸ Lanto Synge, *Mallett Millennium: Fine Antique Furniture & Works of Art* (Antique Collectors' Club, 2000), 13.

⁶⁵⁹ Mallett & Son, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq', 9 February 1894, MS 285, WSRO.

⁶⁶⁰ Possibly those covered in a bold striped fabric depicted on the left hand side of a 1973 photograph of the Drawing Room (Fig.35).

⁶⁶¹ Mallett & Son, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq', 9 June 1894, MS 332, WSRO.

pieces that would contrast and harmonise to endow Standen with a tasteful and artistic interior. The furniture they collected was acquired to create the impression of a well-established, timeless yet comfortable interior that was both modern and fashionable, mixing antique pieces with modern reproductions. Mallett & Co. in Bath became a major furniture supplier to the Beales, many of the primary social and family rooms at Standen contained items acquired from this dealer. Even when the initial furnishings for the house had been procured, the couple continued to visit Mallett's showroom to browse for items to supplement their collection, a quest made much easier by their acquisition of a motor car in 1902.

Even though they would have been well versed in the benefits of travelling by train, especially since much of James Beale's work as a solicitor was railway-related, the Beales were quick to take advantage of the flexibility and freedoms that car ownership conferred. They bought a canary yellow, 1902, 10 HP, Wolseley Tonneau, which was first driven by the youngest son Sam and nicknamed the 'Yellow Peril' (Fig. 213). It meant that new opportunities and freedoms to explore the countryside could be enjoyed with the least amount of planning. After testing it out on short runs to Brighton, they soon ventured further afield. Sam wrote to Helen at school in September 1902 describing a 'tour' which began with lunch in Horsham and then on to Arundel. In the car, they were now free to pick and choose where they stopped. When they got to Arundel for tea: 'we did not think much of the pub there so we decided to go on the extra 11 miles to Chichester where we knew there was a good one [...]'.⁶⁶² A post-card sent by Margaret Beale to her daughter Helen from Chichester demonstrates the extent that she regarded such trips as novel, holiday jaunts (Fig. 214). Stopping off at Salisbury and Stonehenge on route, they clearly enjoyed the freedom to explore whichever place took their fancy, as Sam confirmed in a letter to his sister Helen:

I think father and mother thoroughly enjoy going about like this with our luggage on board and stopping just wherever we choose, it certainly is very jolly.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² Samuel Beale, 'To Helen, from Sam, White Hart Hotel Salisbury', 30 September 1902, CIMG1308, BFP.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

Trips to Bath by car were also popular, especially if it meant a chance to visit their favourite antique dealer.⁶⁶⁴ One journey was described in October 1902 by Maggie Beale in a letter to her sister Helen:

The car party are just in 3 pm having left Marlborough at 10.15 this morning and lunched on the way. Not bad going? No hitch or breakdown since they started. They spent the whole day in Bath and bought furniture etc. at Mallett's.⁶⁶⁵

5.2 European excursions and *objets d'art*

Travelling abroad also engendered a sense of freedom and independence, particularly for women like Margaret Beale. On a visit to Lucerne in September 1874 with her husband James and her sister Mary and brother-in-law Clifford Beale, the men were suddenly called home due to the death of their uncle, Samuel Beale. Finding herself on holiday without her husband she expressed the empowering effect of independent foreign travel in a letter to her father, hinting on the possibility of future adventures:

We have been very comfortable in this hotel and feel so independent now we are capable of going to America and back alone, Mary is quite the manly one of the two and is not daunted by anything.⁶⁶⁶

As a couple, actively searching for art objects and antiques in the 1890s and 1900s whilst travelling to foreign, unknown places also instilled a sense of connoisseurial exploration and discovery. It was an essential part of acquiring an advanced historical knowledge and artistic taste. To convey a carefully selected and individual choice, one that underscored authenticity and experience through travel adventure meant that the Beales dealt with a wide variety of suppliers. As Judy Neiswander has suggested:

Individuality was expressed through exquisite choice and skilful arrangement and an array of antique and foreign objects demonstrated a

⁶⁶⁴ They bought two Hepplewhite arms chairs covered in red silk, two old Chippendale wardrobes, and two blue and white Nankin vases. Mallett & Son, Bath, 'To J S Beale Esq. Bill of Sale', 2 October 1902, MS 373, WSRO.

⁶⁶⁵ Maggie S Beale, 'To Helen from Margaret, 32 Holland Park', 6 October 1902, CIMG1258, BFP.

⁶⁶⁶ Margaret Beale, 'My Dear Father [sent from Luzernerhof Hotel, Lucerne]', 19 September 1974, 2, CIMG0224, BFP.

sophisticated, cosmopolitan appreciation of the scope of history and the cultures of the world.⁶⁶⁷

On September 27 1893, whilst Standen was still being built, the Beales departed on a tour to Heidelberg, Nuremburg and Prague, stopping for a night or two at each town before moving on. Although Margaret Beale's handwritten notes start with a brief list of the museums and historical places they visited, it also emphasises her enthusiasm for collecting indigenous, old and interesting objects:

6th [October] The Germanic Museum, Albrecht Durer's picture's & Wohlgemuth's [&] Karlbach's, Opening of Charlemagne's Tomb, Old furniture etc., Bought cabinet, mugs, lamps etc., Drove round outside the walls in the afternoon, bought copper jugs etc.⁶⁶⁸

For Margaret Beale, the trip was as much about buying useful and beautiful *objets d'art* and furniture as discovering the history and culture of the country they were visiting. They bought a 'copper wood holder' decorated with medieval figures (Fig. 215), used in the Hall at Standen for storing firewood and a chair for the Drawing Room.⁶⁶⁹

On a later trip to Monte Carlo via Calais and Cannes in March 1895, the Beales collected the latest designs in French art pottery. Margaret Beale's hand-written itinerary of the tour details how they visited Vallauris, near Cannes, in search of flower stands. This detail probably refers to an 'art nouveau' style of art pottery made by Clement Massier, one of the region's most prominent potters. Two items of pottery by Massier which remain in Standen's collection are likely to have been those purchased on 8 March 1895 during this holiday; a turquoise glazed vase (Fig. 216) and a tall celadon vase (Fig. 217) now displayed in the Staircase Landing. Clearly inspired by the artistry and quality of the pottery in the region, the very next day, the couple walked to Mont Chevalier Potteries. Here, noted Margaret Beale, they purchased 'pots', which are probably those by French potter Leon Castel - a pair of stoneware vases now on display in the Morning Room (Fig. 218) and a lustre vase in the Drawing Room (Fig. 219).

⁶⁶⁷ Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior*, 54.

⁶⁶⁸ Margaret Beale, 'Diary Notes, 1893 The Beales' Tour to Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Nuremburg and Prague', 1893, 2, CIMG0173, BFP.

⁶⁶⁹ The chair is no longer at Standen; it was given to SRB, (Samuel Richard Beale the youngest son) probably when he married in 1908.

By the time the Beales visited Venice and Florence in September 1898, the style of Margaret Beale's handwritten travel notes were assured and confidently expressed. She not only listed which art treasures they had seen, but also recorded details such as the subject matter, positioning and her opinion of the artist's work. On a visit to the Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, on Thursday 22 September she thought 'Titian's North wall [was] beautiful, J [G] Bellini in Sacristy with 2 saints on either side & angels below; also good wood carving in stalls'.⁶⁷⁰ She clearly favoured objects which showcased the skilled labour of master craftsman rather than works which emphasised surface and aesthetic qualities alone. Accordingly, her opinion of the 'Gesuati' [Gesuiti] Church in Venice was not so favourable; 'lined with green and white marble' she wrote it was 'ugly'.⁶⁷¹ Her travel notes reveal that they were buying historic as well as contemporary articles in Venice and Florence; with references to artisan, well-made household goods. High quality handmade lace from Jesurum, for example, purchased to complement Margaret Beale's growing collection of historic and hand-crafted textiles.⁶⁷² Her interest may well have been inspired by other enlightened women collectors of her social circle who engaged in connoisseurial passion for ancient and antique textiles, such as Louisa Pesel. An expert needlewoman, Pesel travelled extensively whilst acquiring a unique collection of antique embroidery.⁶⁷³ Once the Beales got to Florence, they acquired many more objects, such as framed photographs of original artworks seen on their tours of various art galleries. For example, the two circular photogravure prints with matching carved wooden frames of *Madonna and Child* by Botticelli after the original paintings at the Uffizi were probably purchased in 1898 and are still displayed on the walls of the First Floor Corridor at Standen (Fig. 220).⁶⁷⁴

Margaret and James Beale's passion for travel was combined with a life-long interest in art and cultural history to manifest in a 'domestic collection' of antique

⁶⁷⁰ Margaret Beale, 'Diary Notes "Left Standen on Saturday 17 September 1898"', 17 September 1898, 2, CIMG0180, BFP.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² The company had been founded by Michelangelo Jesurum in 1870 to revive the ancient craft of Venetian lacemaking and by the late 1890s had built up a reputation for producing exclusive household linen.

⁶⁷³ Her collection is now housed at ULITA, University of Leeds International Textiles Archive.

⁶⁷⁴ Madonna the Magnificat, 1481-1485, Inventory No. 1214762.2 and Madonna of the Pomegranate, 1487 Inventory No. 1214762.1.

furniture, *objets d'art* and mementoes. Besides acquiring their knowledge about peoples and places from first-hand experience, they also read reference books, novels and guide books. For instance, they probably took an 1892 copy of *Murray's Handbook for travellers on the Riviera, from Marseilles to Pisa* [...] on their trip to Cannes in 1895.⁶⁷⁵ Besides this book, other travel guides by John Murray and Karl Baedeker can be found in Standen's library collection, one of the earliest is an 1879 Baedeker guide to the *Eastern Alps*. Such books were aimed at educated travellers rather than unlettered tourists, they even included detailed instructions of how to behave when arriving on foreign soil.⁶⁷⁶ However, because such texts tended to be prescriptive, these guides' books were criticised by some as manipulators of cultural values, prompting intellectuals such as John Ruskin to write their own guide books.⁶⁷⁷ He believed that a guide book should be more than just a list of facts; it should encourage a deep understanding of the place. He wrote a text for discerning travellers going to Florence in 1875-77 entitled *Mornings in Florence*, offering an enlightened alternative to Murray's Handbooks.⁶⁷⁸ Although it is not known whether the Beales owned of copy of Ruskin's publication, they did consult other texts to glean a different perspective from that proffered by Murray and Baedeker. Since his mid-twenties, James Beale had owned an 1859 copy of *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* by François-Auguste-René Chateaubriand, a travel history of Greece, Palestine and Egypt.⁶⁷⁹ Their collection of books also contained other travel related matters such as stories of ancient mythology in an inscribed copy of the *Tales of Ancient Greece* written in 1880 by G.W. Cox, currently in the Morning Room at Standen.⁶⁸⁰ These books and others owned by the Beales give a unique insight to their personal taste, in particular, their vision of distant, exotic lands.

⁶⁷⁵ John Murray (Firm), *A Handbook for Travellers on the Riviera, from Marseilles to Pisa* (London: J. Murray, 1892). Morning Room, Inventory No. 3177487.

⁶⁷⁶ Alan Sillitoe, *Leading the Blind: A Century of Guidebook Travel, 1815-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 43.

⁶⁷⁷ Clare Broome Saunders, *Women, Travel Writing, and Truth* (Routledge, 2014), 62.

⁶⁷⁸ John Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence Being Simple Studies of Christian Art for Travellers*, 2nd ed (Orpington, Kent: George Allen, 1881).

⁶⁷⁹ Inventory No. 3177200, Inscribed as a personal gift 'To my good and ancient student, James Beale, affectionate remembrance Paris in August 1865'.

⁶⁸⁰ George W. (George William) Cox, *Tales of Ancient Greece* (London, C. Kegan Paul, 1879).

5.3 Exotic visions and 'Oriental' objects

Early encounters with books of romantic tales and mystic legends undoubtedly influenced the dreams and desires that inspired the Beales' passion for foreign travel. 'The old Arab town is said to be quite Eastern and like the Arabian Nights tales' wrote Margaret Beale in a letter to her father on a trip to Algiers in 1905.⁶⁸¹ Her first impressions of Algeria had clearly evoked visions of the ancient folk tales she had known from childhood. She inherited a copy of *Arabian Nights* of 1838-1841, translated by Edward W. Lane and illustrated by William Harvey when her father died in 1907.⁶⁸² This edition was the first to depict an authentic, Arabic version of the *Nights* tales, earlier translations included Western style illustrations with fabricated backgrounds.⁶⁸³ Thus, as a child Margaret Beale would have been entranced by a book of tales containing such colourful illustrations such as *Headpiece to First Voyage – Bagdad* (Fig. 221). James Beale might similarly have been impressed by the book *Artists and Arabs* a copy of which he had owned since 1870.⁶⁸⁴ Now in the Morning Room, it is inscribed as an author's presentation copy and was given to James by author and artist Henry Blackburn in May 1870. Having just moved to Gordon Square at that time, they lived within five minutes' walk of Blackburn's artist's studio in Gower Street. They probably visited him at his studio, and if so, would have been intrigued by an imagined 'Moorish' interior consisting of an eclectic mix of styles and antiquities; [...] a Florentine lamp hangs from the ceiling, a medley of vases, costumes, old armour, &c, are grouped about in picturesque confusion, [...] (Fig. 222).⁶⁸⁵

Such a book would have resonated with city professionals like James Beale; it contains narrative descriptions of time spent in the Algerian sunshine, proffered

⁶⁸¹ Margaret Beale, 'My Dearest Father Letter from Alexandra Hotel, Mustapha Superior, Algiers', 22 February 1905, 3, CIMG0228, BFP.

⁶⁸² Edward William Lane and William Harvey, *The Thousand and One Nights, Commonly Called, in England, the Arabian Nights' Entertainments* (Charles Knight & Co., 1840). Inventory No. 3168660.

⁶⁸³ Ulrich Marzolph, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 31.

⁶⁸⁴ Henry Blackburn, *Artists and Arabs: Or, Sketching in Sunshine* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1870), Inventory No. 3177431, MR.F.3.6.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

as an escape to middle-class businessmen who faced a depressing, daily view of the London streets on their way to work.

From their home in Holland Park James and Margaret Beale would have imagined tantalising visions of far-off, exotic destinations by reading literature, appreciating art and visiting artists' studios. In 1894 they visited the studio of Oriental artist Carl Haag and purchased paintings of Egyptian scenes. These works of art were soon the subject of great admiration by those in the Beales' social circle. Their cousin Grace Field referred to Haag's paintings in a letter of April 1894: 'I have met several people who have said "we should like to have those ones of Margaret Beale's – they were the ones we like the best".'

Although they were probably never hung at Standen, there appears to be a glimpse of one in a photograph of the Drawing Room of 3 Campden Hill Court, the London flat purchased after the Holland Park home was sold in 1914 (Fig. 223). At the time Standen was being built, the Beales' taste in art and furnishings was clearly swayed by visions of the Orient. On their visit to Haag's London studio home they would have seen that it was lavishly decorated to resemble an Eastern gentleman's house (as illustrated in Figure 48). The image of his studio significantly depicts a centrally placed inlaid coffee table that could easily have inspired the one purchased by the Beales for the Hall during their trip to Cairo and Algeria in 1905 (Fig. 224). In a quest to seek 'authentic' Arabian culture they hired a guide to show them parts of the old town, as Margaret Beale's letter to her father on 5 March 1905 recounts:

We went into one house built around an open court in the true eastern way and we climbed up into the roof where we could see the women on other roofs all busy about their work and there they were unveiled.⁶⁸⁶

By experiencing the 'lived' culture of the indigenous community they were literally authenticating their acquisition of 'genuine' Algerian antiques. Besides the inlaid coffee table purchased in the name of 'Madame Beale', they bought an Old fine inlaid chest for jewels (Fig. 225), together with items of jewellery and old Algerian embroidery from Maison du Club, Mustapha Superieur on 4 March 1905.⁶⁸⁷ These were highly fashionable objects; similar exotic furnishings

⁶⁸⁶ Margaret Beale, 'Letter from Algiers, Dearest Father', 5 March 1905, 2, CIMG0230, BFP.

⁶⁸⁷ Maison du Club, 'Bill of Sale to Madam Beale on Account with G Jockel', 4 March 1905, MS 374, WSRO.

embellished the artistic homes of the Holland Park community, such as a beautifully in-laid cassone in the home of Aglaia and Theodore Coronio, friends and neighbours of the Beales', depicted in Anna Alma-Tadema's *Drawing Room at 1A Holland Park* (Fig. 226). 'Authentic', exotic luxury goods bought from their place of origin counted as prestigious status symbols, especially if the supplier was patronised by British royalty. Emporium proprietor G. Jockel wrote to Margaret Beale a few weeks after their visit recounting how his shop had been endorsed by King Edward VII. He described a visit from the 'King, Queen and Princess who bought many things', even enclosing a photograph of King Edward VII standing in the doorway of his shop (Fig. 227).⁶⁸⁸ Traders like Jockel sold objects that were coveted by Western collectors and discerning connoisseurs, who not only valued them for their rarity and aesthetic qualities, but also because his customers perceived them to be a mark of sophisticated taste.

Oriental and exotic objects specifically bought to decorate the home demonstrated that the Beales were an informed and well-travelled family. In that respect, their travel adventures were varied and extensive. On an expedition to Cairo in 1900, a post-card sent from Maggie Beale to her sister Amy on 3 December 1900 elaborated how they filled their days with excursions and collecting; visiting the Museum, riding around the Pyramids on camels and shopping at embroidery outlets and bazaars (Fig. 228).⁶⁸⁹ The objects they collected, not only symbolised their travel adventures, but for Margaret Beale in particular, they represented knowledge of the outside world, expertly gathered and experienced from beyond the realms of her every-day, domestic circle. As Maria H. Frawley has argued in relation to women travellers who showcased their experiences abroad in journals and diaries, travelling assisted women's participation in a world outside the private sphere, 'in essence to redraw some of the discursive boundaries of their own culture'.⁶⁹⁰ Similarly, the objects

⁶⁸⁸ G. Jockel, 'To Mrs Beale from Club Buildings, Mustapha Superium, Algiers', 26 April 1905, Box 6.7, Box 6.7, NTS.

⁶⁸⁹ Maggie S Beale, 'To Amy Beale, a Post Card from Egypt', 3 December 1900, CIMG3871, BFP.

⁶⁹⁰ Maria H. Frawley, 'Borders and Boundaries, Perspective and Place: Victorian Women's Travel Writing', in *Intrepid Women: Victorian Artists Travel*, ed. Jordana Pomeroy (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 27.

collected by the Beales on their travels showcased their experience of other cultures and their knowledge of the world.

By the late-nineteenth century, no artistic interior would have seemed complete without a selection of Oriental and Japanese goods on display. There was already a huge variety of 'Oriental' or Asian goods widely available in London stores such as Liberty of Regent Street, where the Beales purchased an 'Indian carpet' in January of 1894.⁶⁹¹ Many of the residences in the Holland Park neighbourhood were decorated with Oriental furnishings and accessories. The fashion for such goods was highly influenced by the homes and studios of local artists, such as Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Frederic Leighton, a subject well-documented by Charlotte Gere.⁶⁹² No artistic domestic interior or studio was complete without the aesthetic touches of decorative wares from Japan, 'they carried the desired connotations of luxury and exoticism.'⁶⁹³ It is therefore not surprising that when James Beale retired in 1905, the couple planned a travel expedition that would provide unlimited opportunities to seek out and acquire coveted, authentic 'Oriental' art objects.

By 1906 overseas travel had become more accessible to the prosperous middle-classes and the Beales would have thought of themselves as seasoned travellers. With their two unmarried daughters, Maggie and Helen Beale, the Beales embarked on a 'world tour' spanning November 1906 to July 1907, which would start in India, go onto Burma [Myanmar], Ceylon [Sri Lanka] and Japan and finish by travelling home via Canada. On 19 November 1906, they boarded their steam ship the *S.S. Arabia* operated by Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co (P & O) of London at Tilbury Docks. It was by far their most prestigious and ambitious trip. In the manner of explorers and adventurers their travel exploits were carefully documented in letters, journals, sketch books, photographs and a small pocket diary. The bulk of the written and sketched

⁶⁹¹ The Beales purchased an 'Indian Carpet' in January 1894 from Liberty & Co, 'Bill of Sale Rugs and Carpets', 16 January 1894, MS 265, WSRO.

⁶⁹² Gere, *Artistic Circles*.

⁶⁹³ Kramer, 'From Specimen to Scrap: Japanese Textiles in the British Victorian Interior, 1875-1900', 129.

observations were recorded by Maggie Beale and her mother Margaret and the 'Kodak' photographs were taken by Helen.⁶⁹⁴

The material that survives is littered with references which suggest they were travellers with a purpose or vocation, like 'pilgrims' on a sacred mission. They certainly did not want to appear as un-enlightened tourists and they preferred to associate themselves with the earnest kind of traveller or adventuress who believed they were on a 'sacred' mission of discovery. It was unthinkable to be considered as tourists, as Maggie expressed in her journal entry for 6 January 1907 that related to an account of the Lt. Governor's Camp preparing for the imminent arrival of the Viceroy;

[...] soldiers, native and British and alas! European tourists. It is a desecration to allow sun-hatted tourists in ungainly clothes to stump about these lovely buildings! Helen and I are in despair that we ourselves are just such blots! I have to remind her that we are pilgrims and not tourists, to revive her fainting spirits.⁶⁹⁵

When it came to shopping for Oriental goods, such a characterisation projected them as sincere and knowledgeable collectors who only bought objects of fine quality. Certain 'preferences' were imposed on shopping expeditions by James Beale who frowned upon the buying of worthless trinkets. After a journey to one of the highest placed temples in Kyoto, Maggie recorded in her journal:

[...] the hill grew so steep we insisted on walking and on each side of the narrow road were little shops full of gourd bottles, and cheap china and baskets and curios, to tempt pilgrims and globetrotters. We were very foolish and bought sundry trifles, thereby incurring Father's scorn. He only likes us to buy really "valued things".⁶⁹⁶

As discussed earlier, their perceptions of foreign travel were undoubtedly influenced by guide books and travel narratives written by experienced travellers who had 'been there before'. Included in the Beales' world tour luggage was *The other side of the Lantern* published in 1905 by Sir Frederick Treves, eminent surgeon, traveller and friend of the 'Elephant Man'. His book describes his experience of a world tour that took a similar route to the Beales', an authoritative version that provided them with an exemplar for recording their

⁶⁹⁴ Maggie Beale, "Travel Journal Part I (Transcript) - World Tour," 1907-1906, Standen Digital Archives, NTS.

⁶⁹⁵ Beale, "Travel Journal Part I (Transcript) - World Tour," 39.

⁶⁹⁶ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 29.

travel experiences. Women who sought to substantiate their own opinions of travel often compared their ‘impressions and discoveries with those of established scholars’.⁶⁹⁷ There were even occasions when Margaret Beale could not find the words to express what she saw and deferred to Treves’s version as an acclaimed substitute. In India, for example, in a letter recounting her experiences of a visit to Amber in December 1906, Margaret Beale suggested that her father read Treves’s account of the place because it ‘tells you about it far better than I can’.⁶⁹⁸

The Beale women in particular, sought to distance themselves from what they perceived to be frivolous pursuits. ‘It really was something pretty fine, wrote Maggie, describing the scene as they sailed into Gibraltar;

I must own I took a grim pleasure in learning from my neighbour at table that she had spent all afternoon in the Barber’s shop and hadn’t seen anything at all. It was so exactly what I expected of the fat, powdered thing!⁶⁹⁹

They clearly preferred to identify with the connoisseurial type of explorer who furthered their knowledge of other lands and cultures whilst acquiring authentic, indigenous art objects. Women like Elizabeth, pictured in *On Deck Elizabeth* sketched by Maggie Beale complete with a veiled ‘shikar’ styled helmet, would have epitomised the type of assured, yet respectable women she might identify with (Fig. 229). Framed by an expanse of ocean and sky the portrait certainly seems to capture and celebrate the idea of an individual spirit commencing on a voyage of edification and adventure. However, this persona could be problematic: “female globetrotters” who represented the antithesis of domesticity, were ‘simultaneously celebrated for their achievements and scorned as anomalies’.⁷⁰⁰ Women travellers were only too aware of the difficulties that this contradiction presented. Gertrude Lowthian Bell (1868-1926), for example, came from a background similar to Maggie Beale’s; she was a writer, traveller and archaeologist who visited Persia in 1892 and went on

⁶⁹⁷ Frawley, ‘Borders and Boundaries, Perspective and Place: Victorian Women’s Travel Writing’, 30.

⁶⁹⁸ Margaret Beale, ‘My Dearest Father, from Rajputana Hotel, Mount Abu’, 14 December 1906, NTS.

⁶⁹⁹ Beale, “Travel Journal Part I (Transcript) - World Tour,” 3 Wednesday 21st November .

⁷⁰⁰ Frawley, ‘Borders and Boundaries, Perspective and Place: Victorian Women’s Travel Writing’, 28.

two trips round the world, one in 1897 and other in 1902. When she returned from her travels in 1894, to avoid censure, she published *Safar Nemeh Persian Pictures*, her first series of travel sketches anonymously.⁷⁰¹

Although the ambivalence surrounding the subversive persona of the adventuress did not prevent the Beale females from modelling themselves on such a confident, 'New Woman' type, it was still fraught with difficulties. As English literature and feminist scholar E. Ann Kaplan has argued, travelling by its very nature, involves the process of looking at both oneself and at those who are different.⁷⁰² She highlights the paradoxical status of white women colonial travellers, who effectively enjoy white privilege in colonialism and participate in the 'Imperial gaze, yet they are invariably objectified by white patriarchy through the male gaze.'⁷⁰³ Maggie's sketch of *Elizabeth* exemplifies the contradiction; the veil feminises an otherwise 'male' styled helmet, at once denying the 'male gaze' yet enabling concealment of an Imperial gaze. The imperial gaze is seen as instrumental to how Nepal/India [for example] was conceived as an 'exotic place, the place of the sensuous, the bodily and the sexual', an understanding which defined the Indian and India for British Colonialism.⁷⁰⁴ As they looked at other cultures, the travel narratives written by the Beale family women reveal the extent to which they adopted an ethnographic gaze, one they shared with male counterparts. In a watercolour sketch of Indian fruit sellers *Ground Stall Crawford Market, Bombay, December 10th* Maggie Beale has depicted the figures in a naïve, simplistic style as a way to emphasise their uncultivated nature and difference (Fig. 230). She perceived them as being different from "civilised" man and woman, as her travel diary reveals in her use of the term 'natives':⁷⁰⁵

Then we turned into a real native street, tiny shops below, with just room for a few wares and the shopman (sic) to squat in the middle, swarms of

⁷⁰¹ Gertrude Lowthian Bell, *Safar Nameh. Persian Pictures*; (London, R. Bentley and Son, 1894).

⁷⁰² 'The imperial gaze reflects the assumption that the white western subject is central, just as the male gaze assumes the centrality of the male subject' in E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (London: Routledge, 2012), 5.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 83.

⁷⁰⁵ Frawley, 'Borders and Boundaries, Perspective and Place: Victorian Women's Travel Writing', 32.

natives everywhere, thicker on the ground than you would think possible, every sort of dress and head dress.⁷⁰⁶

Understood from a post-colonial perspective, the way that Edwardian travellers like the Beales viewed 'the other', the peoples and cultures of 'foreign' lands, was informed by discourses of imperialism and expansion. Back at home, the extent of British international influence and power was reflected in domestic living spaces; interiors were decorated by the borrowing, selection and mixing of styles and goods from around the world.⁷⁰⁷

Maggie Beale probably spoke for the rest of the Beale party when she summed up their mission: 'Oriental splendour is what I crave for', she wrote in her journal on Monday 7 January 1907.⁷⁰⁸ Expressing her feelings in the context of a spectacular pageant unfolding for the Viceroy's visit, the Beales' appetite for Oriental magnificence continued throughout their world tour. However, it was a way of thinking that was deeply entrenched with imperialist overtones. One of the main attractions at the pageant was the richly embellished clothing of the Indian princes. A spectacle which can be compared to the traditional *darbar* ceremony, invented by the Viceroy's of India during Queen Victoria's reign to crown the British monarch as emperor or empress of India. Originally the sumptuous clothing worn by the Rajah at the *darbar* ceremony was imbued with sanctity and signified his authority; however, in the 1860s when the Indian princes became subjects of Britain, the Maharajah's clothes and jewels 'shifted from symbolising their authority to marking their subjugation' to British rule.⁷⁰⁹ An excerpt from Maggie's travel journal describing the procession emphasises the spectacle of the ceremonial regalia worn by the Indian princes:

[...] but the native Princes were again the cream of the whole show. Wonderful shades of colour in satin and brocade and cloth of gold and silver and jewels, and retainers in gold laced liveries, two on the box and two behind holding either an umbrella or fly whisks (the most striking of

⁷⁰⁶ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part I (Transcript) - World Tour', 11.

⁷⁰⁷ Lynne Walker, 'Women Patron-Builders in Britain: Identity, Difference and Memory in Spatial and Material Culture', in *Local/global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland (Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 123.

⁷⁰⁸ Beale, "Travel Journal Part I (Transcript) - World Tour," 40.

⁷⁰⁹ Julie F. Codell, "'On the Delhi Coronation Darbars, 1877, 1903, 1911'", *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History.*, 1, accessed 10 March 2016, www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=julie-codell-on-the-delhi-coronation-darbars-1877-1903-1911.

these was a huge silver handled one of peacocks feathers). Some had escorts, and some, beside, a mounted retainer carrying a silver mace.⁷¹⁰

The imagined Oriental spectacle clearly lived up to expectations, as the next day Maggie again enthused in her journal: 'It was oriental magnificence as I wanted to see it!'⁷¹¹ The scenes were captured in a number of water coloured sketches, such as *The Rajah of Benares, calling on the Lieutenant Governor, silver carriages waiting outside* (Fig. 231).

Whilst they were travelling they sought out and purchased furnishings, *objets d'art* and gifts which captured the essence of what they had seen and experienced, in particular those which resonated with their Western, pre-constructed visions of the Orient. Under the guidance of "the Gaffour", the manservant hired for their tour through India, the Beales acquired a variety of clothing items, gifts, brass wares, lengths of silk and other material. Adopting the manner of expert collectors, their quest invariably involved some determined haggling with back-street traders. Whilst in Ahmedabad for example, Maggie recorded that they 'had to scramble up two frightfully steep steps and found ourselves in a tiny dark entry' to buy some silk shawls. When it came to bargaining, she wrote, 'it wasn't until we all got up and Father and Mother had got back into the carriage that the prices came down a good deal and we secured several treasures'.⁷¹²

Their 'Oriental' shopping expeditions evoked ideas of an imagined and mystical East, as Maggie reflected in her journal after a visit to see the Maharajah's jeweller in December 1906:

In the afternoon we had one of the most delightfully "Arabian-nights entertainments" we have yet experienced. [...] our barouche turned down a narrow side street and stopped at a grubby looking door. Out we hopped, thro' a doorway with a patient turbaned doorkeeper, across a yard or two, in one of which a horse was feeding, up a winding stair, pitch dark, and out at last onto a tiny balcony, where, seated cross-legged on the floor was a stout elderly Hindu dressed in white, a gold cap on his head, long gold chain round his neck, immense emeralds in his ears, and attendant sprites beside him.⁷¹³

⁷¹⁰ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part I (Transcript) - World Tour', 41.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 42.

⁷¹² Ibid., 16.

⁷¹³ Ibid., 23.

Maggie's description of events were embellished with anticipation and read more like an adventure story involving the discovery of some marvellous secret; 'out of a dark little room behind him' she wrote, 'were produced one after another really lovely pieces of jewellery till the tables were covered and we were all nearly knee-deep!'⁷¹⁴ In a watercolour sketch called the *Maharajah's jeweller*, Maggie Beale conveys the opulence and colour of their Oriental experience (Fig. 232). Although the same scene was captured in a photograph by her sister Helen whose outline is seen as a shadow in the centre of the image, due to its monochrome nature and static composition, it does not compare to Maggie's expressive version of the occasion depicted in text and watercolour (Fig. 233).

Even though their travel accounts were sometimes conflated with mythical tales of the East, the Beales were constantly interested in local culture and customs. However, their perspective was often viewed and filtered through an ethnographic lens which effectively emphasised or exaggerated cultural difference. On one occasion in February 1907, at Bharmo in Burma [Myanmar] near the Chinese border. Maggie observed in her journal that 'the real charm' of Bharmo was its varied population, such as Burmese, Shan nomads, Kachins and Chinese and 'Indians of all sorts', describing vividly how they had found a Chinese Joss House celebrating a New Year's Festival. They were in a crowd watching two juggling Chinamen, it was a 'curious sight', she wrote. Clearly finding it difficult to relate to such cultural diversity and strangeness, her text and accompanying sketch of the scene borrowed from the imagery of demonization (Fig. 234):

The audience were not exclusively Chinese – they were of all the varieties Bharmo produces and wore all manner of clothes'. [...] Then there were two glorious demons with socks of grey hair, nondescript clothes and huge round white eyes and a crooked smile painted on rather like this.⁷¹⁵

Later, she painted a watercolour entitled *A Japanese Scene*, placing herself behind the crowd in the position of a detached, critical observer (Fig. 235).⁷¹⁶ On one hand, by simply watching a community event or local pageant as visitors, it seems the Beales were remote spectators, whereas, on the other,

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 90.

⁷¹⁶ Currently on display in Standen's Drawing Room.

participating in the activity of bargaining and buying goods opened up possibilities for personal interaction with the local traders. Thus the objects or the souvenirs acquired by the family through bargaining with traders were a material representation of their entire travel experience; both a token of the place visited and a memory of the people they encountered. As Susan Stewart suggests, the capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience is exemplified by the 'souvenir'.⁷¹⁷ Crucially, a souvenir is purchased as a memory of an event that is reportable in narrative form, so that the object represents the experience of its purchaser rather than the original context of its maker.⁷¹⁸

It would have seemed natural for the Beales to view other cultures from an uninvolved and elevated position of 'coloniser'. They subconsciously compared the ways of the local population with 'sophisticated' Western practices; when touring through Shanghai in April 1907, Maggie Beale bargained for some paintings whilst her parents bought an ornate, brass incense burner. Clearly fascinated by 'the Chinese' and their different ways of working, Maggie wrote in her journal;

[...] it is always a joy to watch them counting on those delightful things with beads strung on them (I can't remember their right name) and to have your bill painted with a brush; straight from the shoulder.⁷¹⁹

For the Beales, Japan was the pinnacle of the whole tour: 'Here we are, actually in Japan!' Maggie wrote when they arrived in Kobo on 5 April 1907. It was just as they imagined: 'And it is quite adorably Japanese!' The only way that Margaret Beale could relate her first impressions of Japan in a letter to her father was by recalling images from Japanese paintings or imported, decorated wares that she had seen being sold in London stores:

We are actually in Japan! It is quite hard to believe it and things are so like the pictures and screens and cabinets it is a surprise to find the people are real and alive.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Duke University Press, 1984), 135.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 21.

⁷²⁰ Margaret Beale, 'Dearest Father, Letter from SS Prinz Regent Luitpold, Shanghai', 31 March 1907, 19e, NTS.

With the aid of their guide 'Mizeroki' and a rickshaw for transport, they planned to see a temple or two in the mornings and then go shopping in the afternoons. In general, James Beale approved of and participated in the shopping and collecting excursions planned by his wife and daughters, such as their trip to Mr. Jaehne, a Kyoto based curio collector and dealer recommended by Mr. Brown.⁷²¹ Maggie described their shopping extravaganza at his Japanese house on 12 April 1907 as an aesthetic, 'Oriental' experience that was all-consuming:

[...] he brought out a profusion of lovely things. First embroideries, and mandarin coats more lovely than I have ever seen. We simply had to buy one each. Then a Japanese lacquer incense burning box, complete, then, Chinese-red-lacquer (sic), then China. By this time the floor was one litter of loveliness and we were all sitting on it too;⁷²²

The Beales' shopping list for Japanese goods would have been influenced by images of Aesthetic interiors seen in paintings and illustrations back home. One of the coats they purchased, a highly patterned kimono covered with white and red flowers, touches of gold and lined in bright red silk (Fig. 236) is reminiscent of the Japanese fabric which appears in Tissot's painting of the young women looking at Japanese articles illustrated in Figure 128.

When the Beales went back to the same dealer a few days later, on the 16 April, they indulged in what Maggie described as 'another lovely orgy', hinting that this type of shopping was indulgent, almost scandalous. Perhaps her sentiments allude to the way in which souvenirs, like collections, display 'the romance of contraband', as Stewart asserts 'its scandal is the removal from its natural location'.⁷²³ On this occasion, at Jaehne's the Beales chose even more items than before; a red crepe curtain (Fig. 237) and scarf, items of lacquerware, various pieces of embroidery, some seventeenth and eighteenth century antique china and a bronze gong. Just the day before, they had purchased another quantity of decorative household accessories from S. Ikeda and Co. of Kyoto, such as a 'Bronze Vase with Handles of Dragon'. This was centrally placed on the mantelpiece in Standen's Drawing Room, depicted in a photograph c.1970s (Fig. 238).

⁷²¹ This was probably the father-in-law of the Beale's third and married daughter Dorothy Brown.

⁷²² Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 30.

⁷²³ Stewart, *On Longing*, 135.

The Beales hunted for genuine merchandise; especially items of personal clothing such as coats and kimonos. These were viewed as typical 'Oriental' objects, perceived as markers of social distinction and individuality when worn and displayed back home.⁷²⁴ The kimono, in particular was favoured by fashionable aesthetes and those concerned with dress and hygiene reform because of its comfortable, free flowing style.⁷²⁵ An entry in Maggie Beale's journal for the 15 April 1907 describing an afternoon's shopping reveals that their 'Westernised' perception of kimono types incorporating decorative bright colours was directly linked to their stereotypical impressions of Japanese women's identity:

Our little guide took us to a shop much patronised by Japanese, and not much by English, where real Jap silk kimonos and the silk and crepe to make them of were sold. We climbed a perilous stair and were given chairs and then bales of kimonos were brought out of the old gay sort used by court ladies of old, and now by theatrical companies and dancing girls. Some quite sober ones such as "high class ladies" would use now.⁷²⁶

The Kimono as a metaphor for Japanese identity is central to images of Japan painted by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Western artists.⁷²⁷ The Beales would have experienced this first hand when they stayed in Nikko. According to Maggie's journal, on 21 May 1907 they greeted the Scottish artist, Robert Weir Allan, working on his watercolour of *The Yomeimon Gate of Toshogu Shrine* (Fig. 239).⁷²⁸ A throng of colourful, kimono clad Japanese people come and go on the steps of the shrine creating an impression of a continuous and ageless procession.

Many Japanese prints and paintings also conveyed scenes which contributed to a view of Japan that was naive and timeless in the British consciousness.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁴ Sarah Cheang, "Chinese Robes in Western Interiors: Transitionality and Transformation," in *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, ed. A. Myzelev and J. Potvin (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 127.

⁷²⁵ Elizabeth Kramer, "'Not So Japan-Easy': The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century", *Textile History* 44, no. 1 (May 2013): 13.

⁷²⁶ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 34.

⁷²⁷ Kramer, "'Not So Japan-Easy': The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century', 19.

⁷²⁸ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 64.

⁷²⁹ Chelsea Foxwell, 'Japan as Museum? Encapsulating Change and Loss in Late-Nineteenth Century Japan.', in *Getty Research Journal*, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Katja Zelljadt (Getty Publications, 2009), 49.

Such impressions appealed to Arts and Crafts enthusiasts like the Beales who were inspired by romantic notions of England's medieval past set in an ageless country landscape. They bought a number of prints in Japan by named artists who were already influential in the Western art world. For example, *View of the Whirlpool at Naruto in Awa* by Utagawa Hiroshige I (1797-1858) an untitled set of three triptychs purchased from Mizoroki & Co, 'Gallery of Japan Art Club' on 11 May. One of these is seen depicted in a 1970s photograph of the Hall at Standen as illustrated in Figure 131. On occasions, Maggie Beale could only describe her impression of picturesque Japanese views through images she had previously seen in Japanese prints. She believed that their vibrancy of colour was connected to a smog-free, pre-industrial environment:

I woke at sunrise the other day and the whole scene was just the curious colour you see in Japanese Prints and paintings sometimes. I suppose, it is partly on account of there being hardly any smoke that things are so vivid.⁷³⁰

Reflecting on their impressions, the Beales' travel diaries and letters to family and friends sometimes contained comparisons with their life at home, providing the reader with a 'window' to British culture through their travel experience. For example, Margaret Beale's preferences and prejudices in relation to interior decorations and furnishings were clearly expressed in a letter to her father written on 21 December 1906 whilst travelling on a train through Chhattisgarh in India. Describing a visit to the 'new part' of the Palace of Udaipur, she thought the furnishings and accessories were comparable to something that could be bought in a down-market, London shopping area:

[...] common little china animals and terrible coloured glass table centres which looked as though they had been bought in Westbourne Grove and carpets of dreadfully bad colours and designs, it was quite sad.⁷³¹

Also, when they were staying in Japan, Margaret Beale wrote to her sister-in-law, Lizzie Lansdowne Beale, observing how spartan the Japanese interiors appeared when compared with those at home:

⁷³⁰ Beale, 'Travel Journal Part II (Transcript) - World Tour', 36.

⁷³¹ Westbourne Grove was the address of Whiteley's Department Store. Margaret Beale, 'Dearest Father [In a Railway Carriage Chhattisgarh]', 21 December 1906, 4, 6c, BFP.

One wall has a recess and a picture and a vase of flowers and some sliding cupboards painted or gilded, it makes us think with horror of all the frippery and ugly things we crowd into our houses.⁷³²

Margaret Beale's experiences of Indian and Japanese culture clearly prompted her to think critically about her own home in respect of the quality, aesthetic beauty and arrangement of furnishings and possessions.

When their tour was nearing an end, the Beales clearly felt that they had enjoyed a degree of success with their quest to collect valued 'Oriental' objects; even before the end of the tour James Beale wrote to his son Samuel on 16 April from Kyoto with details of their progress:

The Temples are too numerous to work through, but we have been doing our full duty at the shops. Dropping cheques about but I think getting good value for our money as a rule. This is said to be the best shopping centre in Japan for Embroideries, Bronzes and Porcelain etc. and I think Standen will be quite full by the time we get all the things home.⁷³³

Thus their hoard of Oriental wares 'filled' Standen when they got home. As family photographs exemplify, these 'Oriental' furnishings and souvenirs were a culmination of the aesthetically inspired décor at Standen. Acquisitions from the Beales world tour were arranged and effectively integrated alongside their other collections of antique and reproduction furniture, contemporary art objects and valued family possessions. Adding another layer to their eclectic, artistic interior, these trophies signified the Beales' lived experience of world travel.

⁷³² Margaret Beale, 'Dearest Lizzie (Letter from Japan)', 22 April 1907, 2, 34b, NTS.

⁷³³ James Beale, 'Dear Sam, Letter from Miyako Hotel Kyoto', 16 April 1907, 2, CIMG0234, BFP.

Part Six: 'Identifying' the Beales

Of course, to those to whom a table is but a place to set things on, a chair a thing to sit on, and a cupboard a place to put things in, it matters little whether "poor Aunt Maria's" little legacy be of "early Victorian" atrocity or of the very best Chippendale period, when the table might possess lovely curves and cabriole legs, the chairs be those with widespread carved backs, bow-legged, claw footed, joys in short!⁷³⁴

Writing for *Myra's Journal* in 1895, home décor advisor Mrs Talbot Coke⁷³⁵ admitted that she found it much easier to be sentimental about an inherited legacy if it was 'best Chippendale' rather than if it was a 'Victorian atrocity'. However, while sentimentality over treasured family objects was understandable, she believed that unless the owner of an artistic object was capable of appreciating its inherent beauty, rather than its utility, then such sentiment was irrelevant. Her view of treasured possessions and their place in the domestic interior was decidedly swayed by social ideas of 'good taste', those perceived to be culturally and socially desirable, rather than any personal experience that might be attached to them. Thus, late-nineteenth century notions of what constituted a desirable, family heirloom were often ambiguous and subject to shifting ideas of taste and aesthetic beauty.

Even as Standen was being taken over by the National Trust in the early 1970s, perceptions of the 'value' of treasured family objects within a domestic setting were subject to current trends. At that time 'Victorian' interiors like Standen were unfashionable and not considered worthy of public display.⁷³⁶ In 1973, as the house was being prepared for public display, various advisors recommended that many of the Beales' accumulated and cherished possessions should be disregarded as they did not fit with an agenda which favoured the showcasing of Arts and Crafts objects. As the interior continued to be 'constructed', its value as a social and cultural record of late-nineteenth century middle-class family life diminished. This chapter aims to halt the erosion of the family's presence at Standen by arguing that treasured family items should be retraced and reinterpreted as important signs of the Beales' lived

⁷³⁴ Mrs Talbot Coke, 'Association', *Myra's Journal* (London), 1 February 1895, 4.

⁷³⁵ Charlotte H. Talbot Coke (1843-1922).

⁷³⁶ Ralph Dutton, 'Report on Standen', 1972, STA01/File 5, NTSR.

experience and family history. Moreover, it will demonstrate that they were a vital element of an eclectic and artistic decorative scheme that was enjoyed and experienced as a family home.

Individuals express themselves symbolically in the spatial arrangement and decoration of domestic space.⁷³⁷ Many of the items that originally decorated Standen were prized family possessions, objects which this paper contends were a material expression of the family's identity and social status. A close examination of Margaret Beale's handwritten notes and journals reveals that certain objects were valued for the family connections they represented. Invariably, these pieces also exemplified fine craftsmanship and were widely revered by collectors, artists and connoisseurs who were established in 'elevated' and artistic social circles. In human relationships, material objects are not static entities with fixed meanings; experienced aesthetically and socially as producers of meaning they are 'agents active in creating social relations.'⁷³⁸ In this sense, objects are dynamic, they have the power to alter an individual's perception of the world and to bring 'identities into being'.⁷³⁹ Many of the Beales' prized possessions on display in the home were not merely heirlooms with unchanging meanings, they represented a catalogue history of social relations and meaning to identify the family with wider, social identities beyond the domestic interior.

6.1 Treasured family possessions

Special meaning invested in material objects found in the home derives from lived experience and how they are perceived in a wider social and cultural context. When it came to furnishings and possessions associated with family, Margaret Beale's taste or perception of 'aesthetic' beauty was imbibed with emotion and sentiment. Her *Holly Bush Furnishing* notebook recorded some of the cherished family possessions that were brought to the house when the Holland Park home was sold in 1914. A 'De Morgan bowl given me on my silver

⁷³⁷ Irene Cieraad, *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 2.

⁷³⁸ Sofaer, 'Introduction: Material and Identity', 2.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

wedding by my 7 children' is listed for the Drawing Room.⁷⁴⁰ The bowl was made between 1888 and 1895 at the workshop of Arts and Crafts potter and tile designer William De Morgan (1839-1917) at Sand's End in Fulham and presented to James and Margaret Beale by their children in April 1895 (Fig. 240). Its outer surface is decorated with carnations and dianthus on a vivid blue ground, a design that coincided with Margaret Beale's love of nature, gardening and colour.⁷⁴¹ Carefully chosen as an object their parents would appreciate and value, the meaning attached to its social and cultural context were as important as its aesthetic qualities. As Margaret Beale's notebook suggests, this bowl was invested with meaning beyond its physical form, as a gift, it's symbolic value not only represented her status as the matriarch of a large, united family who had collaborated to buy the bowl, but also her role as a respected wife and partner in a long-lasting marriage. For the Beale children, the meaning and value embedded in their choice of gift was linked to its fine aesthetic qualities and the respected status of its maker. It was a fine example of Arts and Crafts pottery made by De Morgan, a revered craftsman and close friend of Webb whose ideas were in close accord with William Morris. De Morgan and Morris shared similar beliefs and dreams, summarised in an excerpt from May Morris's graveside eulogy spoken at a Memorial held in July 1918:

Their happy dream of utilising the handsome old factories still existing everywhere with their clusters of sturdy well-built cottages, and thus without defacing the country beauty, starting the revival of the old rural industry of England, [...].⁷⁴²

Perhaps the Beale children were familiar with such sentiments, inculcated as romantic notions that shaped their parents' vision for Standen. Their choice of the De Morgan bowl symbolises the Beales' support of Arts and Crafts ideals anchored in the preservation of a rural community and in the elevation of craftsmen and the decorative arts. Furthermore, it was an 'art pottery' bowl

⁷⁴⁰ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 65.

⁷⁴¹ Currently on display in the Drawing Room, the bowl was painted by J Hersey (John or James) in 'De Morgan's 'Persian style' palette but imitating Morris-style fabric and wallpaper designs inspired by *mille-fleurs* tapestries or seventeenth century printed herbals' see Patricia Ferguson, (Honorary Adviser Ceramics), 'Standen Ceramics', May 2013, 2.

⁷⁴² Anna M. W. Stirling, *William De Morgan and His Wife* (New York: H. Holt & Company, 1922), 381.

chosen to celebrate an important milestone rather than an object made from silver, a popular medium for 'Silver Wedding' or wedding related gifts. That is not to say that the Beales shunned the ownership of silver. Over the years they accumulated a good number of silver items, many of which were given to them as gifts to celebrate special occasions.

An inscribed, antique, George III silver cake basket, made by Edward Aldridge, London in 1769 was presented to James Beale by his office in 1870 as a wedding present (Fig. 241).⁷⁴³ It was an object which signified the couple's social status and how James Beale was held in high esteem by the family firm. Throughout the nineteenth century silver remained a symbol of status and an aspiration for the middle-classes.⁷⁴⁴ Other wedding gifts made of silver received by the Beales came from members of their wider family. Four oval dishes with stands and covers were given in 1870 by their cousin William Lansdowne Beale, the son of James Beale's uncle, Samuel Beale.⁷⁴⁵ The giving of such valued gifts could reveal just as much about the giver as it did the recipient. As proprietor of the newly incorporated Parkgate Iron Company Limited of Rotherham, William Lansdowne Beale's wedding present signalled that he was a successful businessman who could clearly afford to purchase silver.⁷⁴⁶ Similarly, a silver swan sugar basin and spoon given by Studley Martin (1811-1888) of Liverpool in 1870, a cousin of Margaret Beale's mother Sarah Field, née Martin indicated that he was a wealthy business owner. He was regarded within the cotton trade as an 'institution in the market', having served as Secretary to the Liverpool Cotton Brokers Association since its inception in 1842.⁷⁴⁷ Thus a gift of silver received into the Beales' household, not only marked important family relationships but was also a trophy which marked the givers social status and rank of the family's wider social network.

While some cherished family objects at Standen were markers of kinship ties, others signified strong emotional connections evoked by childhood homes. The

⁷⁴³ Edward Aldridge, 'George III Silver Cake Basket', 1769, 1214311, NTS.

⁷⁴⁴ Ann Eatwell, 'Capital Lying Dead: Attitudes to Silver in the Nineteenth Century' *The Silver Society Journal*, no. 12 (2000): 59.

⁷⁴⁵ These items were sent to W H Beale, middle son of Samuel Beale (1881-1964) in 1952, in Helen Beale, 'Silver Plate', 1952, 1, Standen MS/46, WSRO.

⁷⁴⁶ Parkgate Iron and Steel Co, was incorporated in 1864 in 'William Lansdowne Beale' (Graces Guide, 2013), accessed 22 July 2013. www.gracesguide.co.uk/William_Lansdowne_Beale.

⁷⁴⁷ Thomas Ellison, *The Cotton Trade of Great Britain*. (London: E. Wilson, 1886), 203–204.

three oak chairs and a table by Kendall in the Hall were bought especially for Standen by Margaret Beale's father. They were reproduction copies of furniture from Blackdown; the chairs, for instance were modelled on one that had previously belonged to the Martins, Margaret Beale's mother's family.⁷⁴⁸

Although these pieces were newly made they were valued because they materially represented Margaret Beale's family ancestry; acting as a constant reminder of her childhood home, and her paternal Grandmother's family home at Bourton-on-the-water. Gifts such as these, given from father to daughter were a way of transmitting family identity from one generation to the next.

Hamlett discusses gifts in relation to domestic objects mentioned in bequest lists and wills. She argues that the middle-classes could be distinguished from the aristocracy through the way they transmitted domestic goods over several generations, not leaving their estate to a single heir but dividing it up amongst their off-spring.⁷⁴⁹ Although this theoretically dismantled the idea of objects designated as heirlooms remaining with the property, she contends that it did not prevent the middle-classes from using objects to ensure the continuity of family heritage.⁷⁵⁰ Certainly Margaret Beale's *Holly Bush Furnishing* notebook with its lists of domestic objects can be read as a record of family heritage.

Other cherished objects from Blackdown were bequeathed to Margaret Beale when her father died in 1907, such as '2 Rosewood stools'.⁷⁵¹ Although they are no longer part of Standen's collection, they are probably those illustrated in the 1970 *Country Life* photograph of the Hall taken whilst Helen Beale was still in occupation illustrated in Figure 141. With such bequests, ideas of family identity, class and gender were transmitted from one generation to the next.⁷⁵²

Utilitarian objects valued for their association to the comfort of the old family home were also significant, such as a 'teapot and basin from Blackdown', which are probably those illustrated in a family photograph of 1888 picturing tea in the garden at Blackdown (Fig. 242). It portrays a sense of how, as Muthesius has argued, adherence to everyday 'old' gives us more comfort than the everyday

⁷⁴⁸ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 67.

⁷⁴⁹ Hamlett, *Material Relations*, 189.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁷⁵¹ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 67,

⁷⁵² Hamlett, *Material Relations*, 192.

'new'.⁷⁵³ In surrounding themselves with treasured family items from their previous homes, the Beales were establishing a reassuring, homely continuity with their past lives. A 'Mahogany table on Pedestal (JSB's Old Nursery table now in [the] Drawing Room)' for example, was listed in Helen Beale's personal notebook of family things.⁷⁵⁴ Representing James Beale's Birmingham roots and his family home at Westbourne Road, it was clearly cherished by the family as an object which materially connected them to memories of the past.

Childhood memories were also associated with inherited pieces or sets of china such as 'Dessert plates, dishes and covered sugar dish [which] came from Blackdown [and] used to be used always when I was there, [in] Worcester brown pattern'.⁷⁵⁵ It is significant that Margaret Beale remembered this dessert service being used when she lived at Blackdown rather than it being just on display. Such objects stimulate remembering because they represent records similar to living memory and can store 'information beyond individual experience'.⁷⁵⁶ The physicality of an object is also crucial; the look, feel, smell and taste, all experienced by the senses, have the ability to evoke memory.

For Margaret Beale, the Worcester china clearly stimulated memories of her childhood and family mealtimes. A child sat at her parents' dinner table would not have been aware of any status associated with the maker of the china and what it symbolised in polite social circles. However, when such an object is later passed down to the next generation, it conveys a family identity and social status associated with the classes who use fine china. At the time that Margaret Beale was furnishing Standen, in certain middle-class circles, a display of 'old Worcester china' was associated with the 'respectable' classes. Such ideas were widely disseminated, in contemporary fiction for instance, such as John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, a series of novels about the life of an upper-middle class family in the early twentieth-century. A subtle discussion takes place in the opening paragraphs of the first novel *The Man of Property* of 1906 about the provenance of a piece of old Worcester china. One of the older family

⁷⁵³ Muthesius, *Poetic Home*, 24.

⁷⁵⁴ Helen Beale, Personal Notebook.

⁷⁵⁵ Beale, 65.

⁷⁵⁶ Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward, and Jeremy Aynsley, *Material Memories* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 2.

members, solicitor James Forsyte, intently examines a china bowl in the home of 'old Jolyon' Forsyte where there is a family gathering to celebrate the engagement of Miss June Forsyte, 'old Jolyon's' granddaughter. Having studied the china bowl for some time, James announces to June: "This isn't real Worcester." He tapped the bowl. "Now, that set I gave your mother when she married was the genuine thing".⁷⁵⁷ In this narrative, fake Worcester china found in such a setting can be read as a metaphor for the 'new moneyed' middle-classes who were often accused of lacking in acquired 'taste', an asset which could only be achieved through an educated understanding of art and culture. In displaying her inherited old Worcester china, it is likely that Margaret Beale clearly understood the key role that 'authentic' objects played in signifying family identity and status.

The Drawing Room at Standen, as one of the most important 'public' and social rooms of the house would have showcased elements of the Beale's personal and collective identity through the display of objects. As Sofaer has argued, 'people choose to play with the expression of identities in public arenas through objects'.⁷⁵⁸ Many of the family items that were carefully arranged and displayed in this room were perceived to be socially desirable, and some even valued as collectable antiques. A Rockingham dinner service, for instance, recorded in Margaret Beale's *Holly Bush Furnishing* notebook as:

Teapot, Rockingham and two covered jars from Westbourne, [which] belonged to Mr and Mrs W Phipson, also plates and dishes with bunches of flowers, they are part of a dinner service which was given to them as a Wedding present in 1799.⁷⁵⁹

The dinner service once belonged to William and Elizabeth Phipson, James Beale's maternal grandparents who lived in Westbourne Road, Edgbaston. When they had married in 1799 they had been given a matching Rockingham tea and dinner service that was later inherited by James Beale, much of which remains at Standen today (Fig. 243). When it was new, Rockingham china was highly desirable; in the mid-nineteenth century it was even the choice of royalty. A Rockingham service noted for its 'elegance of design and beauty of

⁷⁵⁷ John Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga - Complete* (Penguin Books, 2014), 5.

⁷⁵⁸ Sofaer, 'Introduction: Material and Identity', 4.

⁷⁵⁹ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 65.

execution', previously made for William IV, was brought to Windsor from Buckingham Palace especially for a banquet celebrating the christening of the Prince of Wales in 1842.⁷⁶⁰ At Standen, the Beales' inherited Rockingham china was displayed by Margaret Beale in the Drawing Room where it could be admired by visiting family and friends. Thus, the Beales were not only demonstrating a discerning taste for fine china, shared by royalty, the ultimate social role-model of the upper-middle class, but also that their family roots and cultural status had a material, traceable history. However, their interest in old china should not be associated with the late-nineteenth century obsession labelled 'Chinamania'. The phenomenon of collecting old china was often ridiculed in publications such as *Punch*, as a cartoon of 1875 entitled *Chronic Chinamania (incurable)* by George Du Maurier depicts (Fig. 244). Although the cartoon's comic appeal is based around the idea of obsession with rarity and authenticity, in the Beales' case, the uniqueness of the old Worcester dessert set or the Rockingham dinner service ultimately emanated from their association with childhood memories and deceased family relatives.

The idea that possessions can be regarded as parts of selfhood is the subject of a study by Russell W. Belk. His work provides this research with an insight to the way in which possessions might act as a substitute for loss. He believes that personal effects which are inherited from the dead carry more than just a monetary or practical significance; they can represent the material remains of an individual's lived experience, so that 'the prior possessions of the deceased can be powerful remains of the dead person's extended self'.⁷⁶¹ Many items which came to Standen in 1914 when the Holland Park home was sold, as mentioned in Part Two, were previously from Croxley Green in Rickmansworth, the former home of James Beale's sister, Mary Emma Bell Davies. Some 'little purple and grey cups' for instance, were significant not only because they belonged to the deceased couple but also because the Beales had originally inherited them from Westbourne Road.⁷⁶² A writing table with cupboard from

⁷⁶⁰ 'The Banquet at Windsor in Commemoration of the Christening of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales', *The Court Magazine and Monthly Critic*, 1 March 1842: 218-221, (218).

⁷⁶¹ Russell W. Belk, [a consumer research specialist who draws on the work of anthropologists such as Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton]. 'Possessions and the Extended Self', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (1988), 139-69, 144.

⁷⁶² Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 65.

'Croxley' that was placed in the Morning Room at Standen represented continuity and close kinship in Beale family circles. Ownership of the table can be traced through three generations of close family clans; it was given to James' sister Mary as a wedding present by her brother William Phipson Beale in 1880, then inherited by James and Margaret Beale in 1892 and later given to their nephew, Emma's son, Richard Bell Davies by Margaret when he married Mary Pipon Montgomery in 1920.⁷⁶³ Another item that came to Standen from Croxley Green, via 32 Holland Park was a sideboard known as the "new sideboard", similarly first inherited by Mary in 1883 from their father's home at Westbourne Road.⁷⁶⁴ Clearly an object cherished for its long family history and direct link to James Beale's ancestors, it was earmarked for his Study at Standen effectively personalising the space of his private domain. It is quite likely that the "new sideboard" is the bookcase currently on display in Morning Room corridor. It is an item currently catalogued by the National Trust as an R. & A. Garrett design, identified largely by the distinctive shape of the tapered legs found on other Garrett pieces in the house (Fig. 245).⁷⁶⁵ However, although this piece was noted by Margaret Beale as originally coming from 'Westbourne', by 1871 James Beale's parents had moved to Bryntirion in Wales. Therefore, if the sideboard was designed by the Garrett cousins, it would have been an early piece, perhaps one that might have been made during their apprenticeship at art furniture makers Cottier & Co. in the early 1870s. The likelihood of a Garrett designed piece of furniture being owned by James Beale's parents at 'Westbourne' is rendered more credible when considering other contemporary items which came from there. For example, a chair by Morris & Co. with blue velvet cushions owned by Grandmother (or Grandfather) Beale was 'left by Aunt Liz to MSB' [Maggie Beale] is recorded in Helen Beale's notebook of 'family things' c.1970 and illustrated in a later Beale family photograph of c.1998 (Fig. 246).⁷⁶⁶

These pieces of inherited furniture were part of a collection of Beale family possessions that were treasured for their connection to close departed

⁷⁶³ Beale, 69.

⁷⁶⁴ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 70.

⁷⁶⁵ Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, 172.

⁷⁶⁶ Elizabeth Beale, James Beale's elder sister was still living with her parents at Bryntirion when her parents died in 1883. Beale, 'Personal Notebook - Family Things', 2.

relations. Thus having passed through several generations, some of the old and antique furniture that originally furnished Standen was embedded with meaning and integrated into Standen's decorative scheme as valued family heirlooms.

Not all treasured possessions at Standen were passed-down through the Beale and Field family generations; some were presented as gifts and others acquired through acquaintances. Margaret Beale detailed some of their special objects in her *Holly Bush Furnishing Book* in February 1914, such as a music cupboard from Luke Ionides' sale, given to them by James Beale's older brother, William Phipson Beale.⁷⁶⁷ Its importance was also tied to Margaret Beale being a personal friend of Luke Ionides' sister Aglaia Coronio, her neighbour at 1A Holland Park. In addition, William Phipson Beale was an influential London lawyer and liberal politician who mixed with the artistic and influential set of Kensington. His choice of an object that had previously been owned by one of the Ionides clan, their neighbours and influential art patrons, his gift signified his acknowledgement of the Beales' high cultural standing and artistic taste.

The Beales not only appreciated objects with a sophisticated, artistic provenance, they also valued possessions with a wider historical and religious significance. An extract from Helen Beale's journal of c.1970 records that a set of chairs connected with the venerated eighteenth-century theologian and dissenter Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) were once at Standen:

Set of Dining Room chairs & two in studio belonging to this set belonged to Dr. Priestley and bought by JSB from Madam Belloc (née Hilaire Belloc's mother) [sic].⁷⁶⁸

Although this set of chairs is no longer part of Standen's collection, their ownership reveals much about the strength of the Beales' religious beliefs and the extent of their social network. It was probably not by chance that James Beale came to purchase the dining chairs from 'Madam Belloc' who was more famously known as eminent feminist Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829-1925), before she married Louis Swanton Belloc. The Beale family was linked to the Parkes family through Martha Parkes (1769-1845) née Clifford, James Beale's maternal

⁷⁶⁷ Although it was originally planned that this cupboard should go in the Drawing Room, by 1914 it had been moved to the Hall to accommodate additional furniture when the Holland Park home was sold.

⁷⁶⁸ Beale, 'Personal Notebook - Family Things', 2.

Great Aunt who had married John Parkes in September 1802. During their early London years Margaret Beale was on visiting terms with the Parkes family, informing her mother in a letter written not long after moving to Gordon Square in May 1870 that she had recently called on the wife of John Parkes' son, Mrs Joseph Parkes [Elizabeth] in London.⁷⁶⁹ Elizabeth, daughter of Joseph Priestley Jr. (1768-1833), was the granddaughter of Dr. Joseph Priestley, one of the founding fathers of Unitarianism in England. Elizabeth's daughter, Bessie Rayner Parkes attended William Field's Unitarian school for girls as a boarder at Leam between from 1836 to 1846.⁷⁷⁰ She was therefore well-connected to many of the important Unitarian Dissenters in Birmingham, which included many of James Beale's ancestors. For the Beales, the ownership of Dr. Priestley's dining chairs clearly commemorated the religious conviction of their ancestors, and the persecution suffered by many religious Dissenters towards the end of the eighteenth-century. During the Birmingham riots of 1791, Joseph Priestley's house had been ransacked and set on fire, a small amount of furniture survived because it was thrown from the windows of the burning house (Fig. 247).⁷⁷¹ Thus ownership of the chairs materially connected the Beales with this episode of their Birmingham ancestral history enabling them to reconcile these events with the lived experience of their every-day lives.

Although the world had radically changed since the riots, the Beales were among the many Victorians who sought to reaffirm their identity by seeking a continuity with their past that balanced progress and stability.⁷⁷² Thus, information about treasured family objects was passed on to later generations. To ensure that the provenance of the Priestley chairs was not forgotten, Helen Beale left an explanatory note reiterating the story of the chairs inside a book in the Morning Room at Standen. Significantly, it is a 1955 edition of an account of Bessie Raynor Parkes' life, written by her daughter, Marie Belloc Lowndes, called *I too have lived in Arcadia*. Thus many of the Beales' treasured possessions that formed part of the eclectic, decorative interior were valued as

⁷⁶⁹ Beale, 'Dear Mother [letter Sent from 41 Gordon Square]', 4.

⁷⁷⁰ Belloc, Elizabeth Rayner, 'Personal Papers of Bessie Rayner Parkes' (Janus), GBR/0271/GCPP Parkes, Girton College Archive, Cambridge, [accessed 3 October 2015].

⁷⁷¹ Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750–1850* (Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 64.

⁷⁷² Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Victorian England* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 31.

family heirlooms, materially demonstrating the value and appreciation the family personally accorded to objects with historical significance. Accordingly, even some of the antique pieces of furniture collected by the Beales without a family connection were renewed and refashioned, and as the following section reveals, they were seeking to stake a claim on the object's history and cultural associations.

6.2 Renewing and refashioning old furniture

Historically, the practice of renewing and refashioning furniture has been associated with seventeenth-century royalty; at William III's apartments at Kensington Palace for example, work on the furniture collection was carried out by cabinet maker Gerrit Jenson in 1699.⁷⁷³ The need to maintain the royal household to the highest standards was largely driven by the belief that material magnificence and royal power were closely connected.⁷⁷⁴ According to the evidence of warrants and bills detailed in accounts kept by the Royal Wardrobe, royal household furniture was regularly renewed by cleaning and repairing or by refashioning. The items chosen for refashioning by the monarch were usually considered to be out of fashion or no longer needed, often made with materials thought to be too expensive to discard. Two Japanese lacquer cabinets from St. James' Palace were refashioned by Gerrit in 1703-4 to make a new cabinet lined with silk, possibly for Queen Anne's clothes or linen and the left over pieces used for another pair of cabinets and the tops for two tables.⁷⁷⁵ Thus, in this case the cultural status and integrity of the original piece of furniture from the royal household was preserved. A new, uniquely restyled cabinet was created, one that was possibly commissioned and personally used by Queen Anne after her ascension to the throne in 1702. Accordingly, where a piece of furniture was skilfully refashioned to a user's individual requirements, the

⁷⁷³ Olivia Fryman, 'Renewing and Refashioning: Recycling Furniture at the Late Stuart Court (1618-1714)', in *The Afterlife of Used Things: Recycling in the Long Eighteenth Century*, by Ariane Fennetaux, Amélie Junqua, and Sophie Vasset (Routledge, 2014), 89.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

process engendered some feelings of personal satisfaction, even attachment to the finished object.

The practice of making a material object one's own, a subject explored by Belk, is based on the idea that people 'make things a part of self by creating or altering them'.⁷⁷⁶ Re-crafting or remodelling furniture is a recurring theme underpinning some of the Beales' furniture choices for Standen. They created their own collection of 'valued' pieces by purchasing what they considered to be good-quality, hand-made, old furniture from provincial antique dealers like Mallett and Son in Bath. Of the two corner chairs listed in *Holly Bush Furnishing Book* by Margaret Beale for the Billiard Room, one remains in Standen's collection today (Fig. 248).⁷⁷⁷ It is similar to the early George III mahogany roundabout chair pictured in Leighton's Kensington studio in Figure 47. Such an object would have been noticed by the art-loving public, people like the Beales, who circulated artists' houses on Studio Sundays. They originally purchased two commodes from Mallett and Son on 9 June 1894; the Bill of Sale describes them individually, one as 'a commode' and the other as 'a commode (not done up)'.⁷⁷⁸ It is possible that they were acquired specifically to recreate the look of an antique roundabout chair; possibly the first commode had already been converted and the second still required alteration. This prospect is likely, as a few weeks after their purchase the Beales commissioned dealer Charles Sale to modify a commode. A bill of sale dated 20 July 1894 records that they paid fifteen shillings to 'alter one commode corner chair by cutting down the side pieces, corner blocking same, & making new seat upholstering same and covering in calico'.⁷⁷⁹

The idea of remaking furniture can be traced to a fashionable Victorian trend which encouraged householders, especially women, to decorate their homes by making things. It was seen as being resourceful, as an article published in *The Illustrated Household Journal and Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* of March 1881 clarified:

⁷⁷⁶ Belk, 'Possessions and the Extended Self', 144.

⁷⁷⁷ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 2.

⁷⁷⁸ Mallett & Son, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq', 9 June 1894.

⁷⁷⁹ Charles Sale, 'Dr to J S Beale Esq.', 20 July 1894, MS 319, WSRO.

Modern decorators and artists cannot endure imitations of any kind; but if those who cannot afford to purchase the genuine articles choose to exercise their ingenuity by making things which are pleasing to the eye and will render their homes more attractive. I do not see their tastes will be lowered therefore.⁷⁸⁰

In the Beales' case, remodelling an eighteenth-century commode into a fashionable antique corner chair would not only have been related to achieving an artistic look for less money, rather, it was a way of displaying artistic ingenuity and good taste. In this connection, *Myra's Journal* positively encouraged their readers to hunt for furniture bargains; an article published in 1889 advised:

Our country readers should look around the old curiosity shops in the country towns to try and pick up an old specimen, which they could soon renovate and restore to its old position as a "thing of beauty".⁷⁸¹

Such sentiments link simultaneously to a collector's urge for regeneration: 'To renew the old world – that is the collectors deepest desire [...]' were ideas suggested by Benjamin in his analysis of collector's motives, mentioned previously in Part Four.⁷⁸² Another item, a 'round table' costing £1 from Mallett's in Bath was described as being 'done-up'. It is quite possible that it is the table in the Dining Room where Amy Beale was arranging flowers, shown in Figure 174. On close inspection, it is evident that this item was one of the tables to have received a 'make-over', described in a handwritten family inventory of 1969 as a 'mahogany swing-leg oval table with colts' foot feet (Fig. 249). The Beales were literally regenerating pieces of old furniture to rekindle a sense of the past for a freshly created space that was devoid of its own history.

On other occasions, Mallet & Son were instructed to alter selected pieces of furniture to suit specific functions. According to antique furniture specialist, John Bly, the last third of the nineteenth-century was 'the great age of the furniture pastiche'; a sizeable amount of plain furniture from the last quarter of the

⁷⁸⁰ "Art at Home.," *The Illustrated Household Journal and Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (London), January 3, 1881: 139.

⁷⁸¹ 'Artistic Homes: Or, Fashion in Furniture', *Myra's Journal* (London), 8 January 1889, 415.

⁷⁸² Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 61.

eighteenth-century 'was repolished and re-inlaid in the Sheraton manner'.⁷⁸³ Because of the Victorian interest in such antiques, many cabinet-makers and craftsman were commissioned to refashion old furniture.⁷⁸⁴ Bly argues that they were actually modernising their old furniture, especially the larger households which owned sixteenth and seventeenth-century oak items that had been handed-down through family generations. Although the Beales engaged in the refashioning of antique furniture, it involved using pieces acquired from antique dealers rather than those recognised as family heirlooms sold through London auction sales. Two tables bought from Mallett & Son were altered and refurbished for Amy Beale's bedroom (Room No.2) on the First Floor. One was made into a dressing table with a brass handle by changing the height then polishing, and the other, described by the Bill of Sale, as a 'card table [of] satinwood', was made into a washstand with marble, a brass rail and a tray arranged at the base.⁷⁸⁵

Why would the Beales purchase antique furniture to refashion when they could easily have bought a modern ready-made dressing table or washstand? One explanation is that they wished to identify with the cultural values that the antiques represented; 'the desire to identify with an era, place, or person to which [they] believe a desirable set of traits or values adheres'.⁷⁸⁶ In the late-nineteenth century, antique furniture was certainly one of the desirable commodities sold by London's fashionable department stores, as an article in *Myra's Journal* of 1 May 1895 entitled 'Furniture at Messrs. Debenham & Freebody's' elaborated, advertising [t]he great English makers of the last century, Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton and others [...], the article stressed how antique furniture by these makers was sought after by 'connoisseurs of old furniture'.⁷⁸⁷ In January 1894, for the South Spare guest bedroom, Room No.3, the Beales bought a looking-glass from dealer, Charles Sale described as 'inlaid shield glass, bevelled plate'.⁷⁸⁸ To complement the mirror, the next month they searched for a suitable dressing table and

⁷⁸³ John Bly, *Discovering Victorian and Edwardian Furniture*, Discovering Series ; No. 150 (Aylesbury: Shire Publications, 1973), 58.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁸⁵ Mallett & Son, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq', 9 June 1894, 2.

⁷⁸⁶ Belk, 'Possessions and the Extended Self', 149.

⁷⁸⁷ 'Antique Furniture at Debenham and Freebody', *Myra's Journal* (London), 1 May 1895, 28.

⁷⁸⁸ Sale, 'Dr to J S Beale Esq.', 22 January 1894.

purchased an 'old Sheraton sideboard' from Mallett's. The Sheraton name clearly attracted the Beales for they decided to convert it into a dressing table by 'doing up, lowering and altering [it's] drawers', as itemised on the Bill of Sale.⁷⁸⁹ If this piece of furniture was going to be on view to guests, a Sheraton provenance would have been important. Furnishing your bedroom with genuine antique furniture by coveted designers was an aspiration, even if it had to be adapted for a new purpose. These sentiments are illustrated in an excerpt from an article entitled 'Country House Furniture' published in *The County Gentleman: Sporting Gazette, Agricultural Journal* of June 1898. On a shopping trip to purchase artistic bedroom furniture, the author described how her wealthy cousin justified her excessive spending on bedroom furniture because she desired Sheraton, even if it meant refashioning some of the items:

"I mean to have a Sheraton bedroom", she said, and chose a magnificent piece of furniture in the way of a wardrobe – not a reproduction, mind you, but the genuine thing – and followed up by an old Sheraton buffet, which is to do duty as a dressing table.⁷⁹⁰

Similarly, when the Beales were shopping to acquire furniture for Standen they were constantly evaluating pieces that might be suitable for refashioning. This 'home-making' practice was not only connected to the value they placed on the quality of a well-made piece, but also to the idea that such an object retained an element of its maker's personal creativity. As Belk has argued, it relies on 'something of the extended self of the previous owner, artist, or craftsperson adhering to the work'.⁷⁹¹ In the Beales' case, the newly refashioned antique associated them with the 'good work' and craftsmanship of the object's original maker and the elevated social status that ownership of antique furniture conferred.

Connected to the idea of refashioning furniture is the activity of imitating fashionable styles, in particular, furniture which resembled the reproduction designs of the 'commercial' range sold by Morris & Co. As mentioned in Part three, the Beales clearly favoured Morris & Co. reproduction furniture; it is therefore quite plausible that they searched for other pieces of furniture which

⁷⁸⁹ Mallett & Son, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq', 9 February 1894, MS 285, WSRO.

⁷⁹⁰ Esme, 'Country House Furniture', *The County Gentleman: Sporting Gazette, Agricultural Journal*, and 'The Man about Town' (London), 11 June 1898, 778.

⁷⁹¹ Belk, 'Possessions and the Extended Self', 149.

resembled the styles that the company were selling. One example is a set of six chairs and two armchairs that the Beales purchased for the Morning Room in March of 1894, from H. Haydn York, a local East Grinstead dealer specialising in 'Old Historic Furniture, [...] Etc.'. ⁷⁹² They resembled a Morris & Co.

Chippendale chair upholstered in *Flower Garden* which was later depicted on page 58 of the Morris & Co 1912 catalogue, No.165 (Fig. 250). Furthermore, in April 1894, Margaret Beale commissioned the same East Grinstead dealer to cover the eight chairs with *Flower Garden*, a silk and wool Damask she had earlier purchased from Morris & Co. on 16 February 1894. ⁷⁹³ It is quite possible that she had originally seen this fabric displayed at the Ionides home at 1 Holland Park. One of these chairs can be seen in the photograph of Dorothy and her friend the Morning Room in Figure 201. Another example is the two armchairs bought in 1894, currently on display in the Drawing Room which are widely thought to have been supplied by Morris & Co. (Figs. 251 and 252).

Authentication of the chairs as Morris & Co. is largely based on an identification of their upholstery fabric as being Morris & Co's *Utrecht velvet* and their similarity to the chairs illustrated in *Upholstered Furniture Catalogue* as models No.363, the large "divan" easy chair on page 54 (Fig. 253), and No. 178, *Wilton Easy Chair* on page 55 (Fig. 254). However, although there are similarities, the chairs featured in the catalogue are a clearly a different design to those currently at Standen; furthermore, there is no extant corresponding Morris & Co. Bill of Sale in the Standen archives to substantiate such a provenance. Their Morris & Co. upholstery can be explained by Margaret Beale's note which reveals that a 'sofa and three chairs in the Drawing Room were recovered by Morris' in February 1914. ⁷⁹⁴ Margaret Beale actually recorded buying two armchairs from Mallett & Son in her *Holly Bush Furnishing* notebook as '2 large arm chairs £14', which can be interpreted to mean that they were not actually a matching pair. ⁷⁹⁵ It is more likely therefore, that the Beales bought the two armchairs in question from Mallett's to emulate Morris & Co. models, especially since they were later re-upholstered in Morris & Co. fabric. Another example is

⁷⁹² York, H. Haydn, 'J S Beale Esq, Bill of Sale', 29 March 1894, MS 287, Standen Archive, WSRO.

⁷⁹³ Morris & Co, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq., 32 Holland Park'.

⁷⁹⁴ Margaret Beale, "Standen Repairs Book 1910-1938," Feb: 1914, Box 8:28, NTS.

⁷⁹⁵ Beale, 'Holly Bush Furnishing Book', 3.

the reproduction Chippendale style settee, currently upholstered in red velvet that was probably acquired from Mallett's in February 1894 (Fig. 255). Pictured in a family photograph behind Margaret and James Beale in the Hall c.1898 (Fig. 256), it is undoubtedly similar to the Morris & Co. Chippendale settee they ordered in 1894.⁷⁹⁶

When they decorated Standen, the Beales were remaking antique pieces and imitating fashionable Morris & Co. reproduction furniture using antique pieces selected from reputable dealers.⁷⁹⁷ They were clearly embracing contemporary, fashionable taste whilst being creative, characteristics which marked an individually styled, 'artistic' interior. Thus, their diverse collection of antique and 'period' furniture included a variety of original pieces that were refashioned and integrated into Standen's decorative scheme. Combined with a quantity of treasured family possessions these objects formed another layer of Standen's eclectic and Aesthetic interior: they not only defined the Beales' identity, but also played an integral part in their home-making process.

⁷⁹⁶ Mallett & Son, 'Bill of Sale to J S Beale Esq', 9 February 1894.

⁷⁹⁷ It should be mentioned here that the Beales purchase of Morris & Co. and other 'period' reproduction furniture problematizes their complete allegiance to Arts and Crafts principles, such as the disapproval of the slavish copying of past styles.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the creation of Standen through the lens of lived experience to reinstate the presence of the Beale family to histories of the house. By investigating themes of design, decorative style and gendered use of domestic space, it has constructed a rich, nineteenth-century social and cultural context for the creation of Standen, focussing on how its interiors were decorated, furnished and enjoyed by the Beale family between the years of 1890 to 1914.

Part one, Dwelling on family history 1840-1890, examined James and Margaret Beale's early history beginning with mid-nineteenth century Birmingham and Leamington and then 1870s London. Focussing on the places and homes of their childhood, it highlighted how the social and religious networks of their formative years later informed the Beales' vision for the creation of Standen in 1890. Westbourne House in Birmingham was remembered in the naming of the 'Westbourne' bedroom, one of the guest bedrooms on the first floor at Standen. The reconstruction of Bryntirion in Dolgelly, overseen by Arts and Crafts architect Andrew B. Phipson, used local stone quarried on site, a practice revisited later in the building of Standen. Blackdown at Leamington provided Margaret Beale's inspiration for some of Standen's magnificent trees. Furthermore, their liberal, Unitarian, middle-class upbringing instilled a regard for respectability and traditional conduct whilst encouraging a progressive outlook, qualities which were not only reflected by Webb in Standen's design, but also woven into the ideology that underpinned the Beale's decorative taste.

The second section featuring the Beales' years in London pointed out the significance of their city homes; Gordon Square for its access to respected Unitarian and family networks and Holland Park for its position amongst the artist studios and homes of wealthy patrons who circulated the London art world. As a family who were rising members of the professional middle-classes, it explained how the Beales sought to establish and consolidate their social identity through art and the attainment of cultured taste, an aspiration which was manifested in the material culture of home. Through social and residential networks in London they connected with many artists and artisans who followed

the ideals of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Philip Webb, Standen's architect was certainly the most influential introduction secured through the Beale's London social circle. The family also patronised little-known designers such as Agnes and Rhoda Garrett, the pioneering cousins who were in the early stages of setting up their interior decorating business. The Beales not only purchased a number of furniture items from the Garretts for their Holland Park home but they also became involved in Ladies' Residential Chambers, a ground-breaking venture to construct residential accommodation for independent, professional women. Although the Beales support for women's education and advancement was quietly undertaken, many aspects of their life at Standen illustrate their commitment to these beliefs, not least in the freedom extended to their daughters to express individuality.

Part Two, a 'house in the country', identified a number of factors leading to the conception of Standen that were dictated by the family's lived experience. The location of the new house was swayed by their existing knowledge of the Sussex countryside gained from journeying from London to the south coast. In addition, a regular train service was in operation from East Grinstead to London and James Beale played golf at the Royal Ashdown Golf Club nearby in Forest Row. The timing of their purchase of the land was also important since the Beales were seeking to buy a country estate when many large landed estates were being split into smaller parcels to attract wealthy middle-class buyers. They were persuaded by the private, remote location of the estate, perceived as a countryside idyll which resonated with beliefs championed by Arts and Crafts enthusiasts. For them it provided the opportunity to own a country retreat which also contributed to the preservation of rural life from the effects of industrialisation. Their vision of an artistic home in the country was not only underpinned by romantic sentiments but it was mediated and expressed through art, design and family tradition. Furthermore, their choice of Philip Webb as their architect who was known to work for artists and artistically-minded clients further reinforces the idea that they sought to create an artistic home from the outset. In this connection, the second half of the chapter demonstrated how the Beales' input and collaboration with Webb on the design and ongoing building work at Standen was extensive and continuous.

Throughout the whole process, the Beales were involved in decision making; no details were considered too small for their attention. When the house was finished, it was a product of both architect and client which clearly accounted for the 'human factor' of the building expressed by contemporary observers.

Part three, 'The artists', revealed that Standen's artistic credentials were sanctioned through the presence of creative 'artists' amongst Beale family ranks. Pointing to photographic portraits taken by Frederick Hollyer as the house was being finished; it argued that Margaret Beale and her daughter Maggie identified themselves as 'the artists' of Standen. The first section explained how Margaret Beale expressed her artistry through gardening; an activity inspired by her love of nature and the open countryside surrounding Standen. Even before Webb was approached to be Standen's architect she had begun her life-long project to design the garden. Her passion for gardening is interpreted as an empowering occupation which paved the way for Margaret Beale's participation in activities beyond the realms of domesticity and life at home. She created a garden with a variety of outside rooms, each with different characteristics. Managed with a professional approach she corresponded with garden experts, visited other gardens and collected exotic plants to perfect her craft. She created a garden that reflected both Arts and Crafts ideas and Aestheticism; it was both aesthetically pleasing and functional, there were areas designated for sporting activities and places which showcased her collection of foreign and exotic plants. The second section highlighted their second daughter, Margaret Sarah Beale, "Maggie", as the other artist in the family. She was known as the person the family turned to for advice on artistic and aesthetic matters. Her interest in art and culture was cultivated from an early age and enhanced at finishing school, a progressive institution where she made many friends, some of whom later became well-known in artistic and literary circles. Following in the footsteps of other members of the wider Beale family, her artistic credentials were consolidated when she attended the Slade School of Art in 1896. Her art training was not only influenced by her tutors, Wilson Steer in particular, but also her talented fellow students, such as Gwen and Augustus John who accepted her as part of the 'popular clique' in art classes. In family circles Maggie's artistic talents were undisputed which meant that she would

have been involved in many of the Beales' decisions regarding the style and arrangement of internal decorations and furnishings at Standen. When it came to judging 'beauty' and style it was clearly Maggie Beale who was consulted for advice.

Part Four 'Styling Standen', argued that the Beales viewed Standen as a life-long project that was both a statement of their identity and a work of art. It examined how they decorated and furnished Standen's interiors to achieve an eclectic combination of Arts and Crafts style combined with elements of 'Aesthetic' beauty that was layered with antiques, *objets d'art* and exotic objects. It considered case studies of the Hall, Billiard Room and Dining Room to demonstrate that the Beales not only had a huge regard for historic architecture and design, embracing Arts and Crafts ideals, but they also endorsed a modern version of past styles which included the purchase of well-made reproduction furniture by Morris & Co. In choosing decorations and furnishings sold by Morris & Co. and hand-made objects by individual craftsmen they were expressing an allegiance to an Arts and Crafts ethos. Although these ideals were not always strictly followed, some were evident in the way the family experienced their living space. The medieval themed Hall, originally a darker, smaller reception room was enlarged by Webb to accommodate a grand piano. It became a brighter, larger space; there was additional light from the new bay windows and the painted wood panelling colour was changed from red to white. It was used as a space for entertaining guests and family musical evenings. The bright décor of the Billiard Room expressed a sense of cleanliness, light and healthy living. Gendering of space shifted here as it became a place for women billiard players and family recreation. With Arts and Crafts ideas interwoven with elements of Aestheticism, the style of the Dining Room referenced romantic and nostalgic notions of a medieval England that harmonised with nature. It was a space where family portraiture was hung; when the family gathered in the Dining Room they were reminded of their lineage, identifying with past generations to construct continuity with their modern, lived experience. For the Beales, Arts and Crafts interiors represented progressiveness and reform and in the case of the Hall, Billiard Room and Dining Room it ultimately manifested

itself in the relaxation of conventions traditionally associated with masculine gendered space.

A consideration of Aestheticism in the second section of Part Four, continued the discussion of gendered domestic space through an examination of Standen's Drawing Room and Morning Room. For the Beales, a display of emblems associated with 'Aesthetic' style would have been complementary, not distinct to their Arts and Crafts preferences. They visited galleries and artist studios known to be frequented by Aesthetes and approved elements of design for Standen widely associated with Aestheticism, such as the sun flower motif and the 'Queen Anne' style and Oriental artefacts. Historic family photographs and drawings revealed that the Aesthetic materiality of the Drawing Room and Morning Room symbolised a feminised 'beauty and harmony' which signalled feminine control and empowerment rather than restraint. Harmonising their dress attire, jewellery and accessories with the backdrop of the *Daffodil* textile, the Aesthetic style of the Beale family women is pictured as an expression of independence and individuality.

Countering some of the modern-day impressions of the Beales' preference in furnishings and decorative objects, Part Five, Travelling and Collecting, argued that the Beale family's extensive travelling and collecting activities demonstrated their 'taste' was anything but 'quaint'. It focused on three travel 'destination' themes to reveal that the family were frequent travellers who thought of themselves as 'connoisseurial' collectors rather than unenlightened tourists. They sought out and sent home many items of antique and reproduction furniture, *objets d'art* and 'Oriental' artefacts from their travels. Some of these went straight to Standen and others arrived there in 1914 when the Holland Park home was sold. When they were planning to build Standen, the Beales were undoubtedly inspired by the eclectic interiors of the artistic homes in their Holland Park neighbourhood. Wealthy art patrons like the Ionides family and many of the eminent artists who regularly opened their studios to the art-loving public furnished their interiors with objects garnered from travelling to Europe and the East. The Beales understood that a rich display of authentic exotic objects symbolised a refined and cultured taste. They therefore sought to fashion themselves as well-travelled and cultured and this was showcased in

the interior decoration of their home. Thus at Standen, hand-carved pieces of furniture placed in the Hall and Porch were arranged alongside copper and brass objects from Nuremburg. They collected art pottery from the South of France, made by acclaimed potters and notable for their 'modern' design. The Beales' interest in Eastern culture was first engendered at home; furnishings were purchased in London such as a large Japanese cabinet for the Drawing Room. They were attracted to paintings of Arabian deserts by artists such as Carl Haag, a member of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour and visited his 'Eastern gentleman' themed artist studio in Hampstead. When they toured further afield, they stayed at exotic destinations such as Algiers and Cairo, places where they purchased many 'authentic' Oriental items and textiles, such as an ornate jewel cabinet for the Drawing Room. The pinnacle of their travelling and collecting experience was their world tour 1906-7, in particular their visits to India and Japan where they bought all manner of exotic artefacts, such a brass incense burner and Japanese paintings for the Hall. The Beales' captivation with the 'Oriental' was materially expressed by the artefacts they brought home to exhibit. They not only represented the family's lived experience of travel and other cultures, but also formed an integral layer of Standen's eclectic, decorative interior.

Finally, Part Six, Identifying the Beales, firstly investigated the family's treasured possessions, another set of objects that Margaret Beale gradually integrated into Standen's eclectic interior. It highlighted how the materiality of personal objects, such as an art pottery bowl by William De Morgan was embedded with meaning, not only as an intimate, commemorative gift but also as a symbolic object with wider cultural significance. Such objects were often cherished because they represented a memory of deceased family; inherited through a will or a bequest they often conferred status and family identity to provide a bridge between past and future generations. The second section, Renewing and refashioning old furniture, continued to focus on Standen's indigenous objects to discuss some of the furniture items refashioned and renewed by the Beales when they originally furnished Standen. It demonstrated that when they were buying furniture, they clearly had prototypes in mind, items probably seen in artists' houses, art magazines or in the home of their important friends that

they wanted to emulate. Whilst a named historic designer, such as Sheraton was coveted, the function of the item was less important, a commode could become a fashionable corner chair or a sideboard could be made into a dressing table. The Beales ascribed to the 'art' of interior decoration, one that was individually expressed by the refashioning and renewing of antique furniture. When they shopped at Mallett's in Bath, they even sought to emulate the designs of reproduction furniture retailed by Morris & Co., such as two large armchairs bought for the Drawing Room that were later covered in Morris & Co. Utrecht velvet. Thus their treasured objects and the pieces of furniture they refashioned or renewed formed another integral layer of Standen's diverse decorative interior, one that was meant to be viewed as a unified and harmonious whole in conjunction with the fabric of Webb's 'artistic' design. In the first two decades of Standen's existence the decorative interiors created by the Beale family simultaneously referenced the past while looking forward to the future. Standen's interior space was decorated and furnished in an eclectic mix of styles, harmoniously blending Arts and Crafts with Aestheticism. These interiors undoubtedly reflected and were informed by the Beales lived experience and a social and cultural context that was bound up with a sense of place. When they were dismantled and reinterpreted as singularly 'Arts and Crafts', memories of the family were obscured and the interiors lost some of their historic integrity, an oversight that this thesis has now redressed.

This thesis is the culmination of an investigation focussing on the details of the Beale family's lived experience of Standen. Not only will it have an impact on interpretations of Standen for dissemination to the visiting public, it also opens up possibilities for future research projects.

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BCA Birmingham City Archives, Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Birmingham, B1 2ND

BFP Beale family private archive collection

KCLS Kensington and Chelsea Local Studies collection, Kensington Central Library, Phillimore Walk, London, W8 7RX

NAL National Art Library, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2RL

NTS Standen Archive, National Trust, Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4NE

NTSR Standen Archive, National Trust Regional Office, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH

RIBA Philip Webb Archive, RIBA British Architectural Library Drawings and Archives Collections, Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, SW7 2RL

SFA Sambourne Family Archive, Leighton House Museum, 12 Holland Park Road, London W14 8LZ

SPAB Philip Webb Archive, SPAB (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings), 37 Spital Square, London, E1 6DY

SSFA Slade School of Fine Art, Archive Records, UCL Library Special Collections and UCL Records Office, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

TNA The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

WCA Westminster City Archives, Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London, SW1P 2DE

WSRO Standen Archive, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1DD

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